

The Role Of Dreams In The Study Of Human Transformation

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ABSTRACT

The Role of Dreams in the Study of Human Transformation

This study of fifteen hundred dreams of fourteen people who underwent a silent, solo spiritual retreat shows that dreams can be used to monitor the stages of a psycho-spiritual transformation process. They can also be used to monitor and mirror the differing degrees of altered states of consciousness that are encountered in such a transformation process. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses, which were used independently of each other, arrived at the same conclusions. The dream data was relatively unaffected by differences in the retreatant's age, gender, culture and the degree of exposure to the spiritual retreat process, spiritual ideas, texts and teachings. The results also appeared to be basically independent of the types of spiritual practices prescribed, although the retreatants acknowledged the importance and helpfulness of these practices in their process, i.e. the spiritual practices together with the confines of the retreat environment served more as a catalyst in the transformation process which had its own time and degrees of unfoldment. Surprisingly, although different retreat guides were used, with different retreatants, and in some cases more than one guide was used in the same retreat, this had little observable impact on the data. This only served to emphasise the impact of such an inner process on the subject, which when unleashed seemed relatively independent of external factors.

The results of the retreat dreams study were then compared, using the same qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, with over a thousand dreams of a subject who did not undergo a spiritual retreat but who experienced a profound psycho-spiritual transformation over a period of two years. This person's dreams showed three distinct cycles of transformation, each of which developed exponentially from cycle to cycle. A second comparison was made with a clinical case study taken from the collected works of C.G. Jung, which described two cycles of dreams, during a similar psycho-spiritual transformation process. The model of transformation derived from the retreat dreams study showed very similar patterns to those found in both long-term, single case studies.

Four main conclusions were drawn from this study. Firstly, dreams seem to originate from the interaction between the worldly impressions of everyday life and the innate archetypal dimensions of consciousness that lie within the human psyche. Secondly, that people who undergo a psycho-spiritual transformation do so in a four stage process during which they also encounter, according to their spiritual capacity, six subtle levels of consciousness. The levels of consciousness and the stages of the process are encountered in a specific sequence or order. Thirdly, that dreams which include a spiritual or sacred dimension impact the dreamer in a way that facilitates their psycho-spiritual transformation. The fourth and most important point is that this thesis extends the pioneering work of Carl Jung by not only acknowledging the spiritual experiences in the psychological process of individuation, but also revealing and describing an inherent order of subtle spiritual steps or leaps of consciousness that the subject passes through during this process. As such the research makes a significant contribution to bridging the gulf between the traditional Eastern or spiritual views and the modern Western psychological views of the role of dreams during the process of human transformation. The result is that transformation is seen as both psychological and spiritual, or psycho-spiritual. Finally it is suggested that this model of transformation is applicable to the psychotherapeutic context. It could well serve as a basis for a new theory of dreams.

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Preface

The field of transpersonal psychology has arisen in the past thirty years to investigate the psychological and transformative domains of human experience, including the psycho-spiritual dimension of psychotherapy, consciousness studies and the mind-body therapies. During this time it has also been concerned with establishing itself as an academic discipline.

This thesis is concerned with the role of dreams in the study of human transformation. Since a large part of the research focuses on dreams recorded by retreatants whilst on a spiritual retreat, a suitable transpersonal approach was developed to allow a fuller appreciation and understanding of the topic. Until recently, transpersonal researchers have tended to borrow research methods from the positivistic paradigm, with the result that much of the important research data, which is needed to include the spiritual dimension, is lost. Thus, it would seem more appropriate that transpersonal research methods, which uniquely complement the dynamic nature of a transformative human experience, be employed. However, this requires the researcher to move beyond the positivistic paradigm. On the other hand, since the transpersonal psychotherapy foundations stand upon predecessors such as psychoanalysis and humanistic and existential psychotherapy practice, it naturally uses ideas and items from these more traditional and established psychotherapeutic approaches.

Accordingly, a number of new and unusual terms are used throughout the thesis which need to be clarified and defined from the outset. Hence the inclusion of a glossary of terms. Whilst the subject of dreams is not in of itself new, the contents of the dream data and the context within which the dreams take place are relatively new. Two types of terms, one set deriving from modern transpersonal psychological research and therapeutic practice, the other being a set of definitions of spiritual items, are therefore included. The glossary of terms has also been grouped, as much as possible, by topic and follows roughly in alphabetical order in Appendix I.

Chapter 1

The Role of Dreams in the Study of Human Transformation

1.0 Statement of purpose/intent of thesis: the research question

The intention of this thesis is to investigate the role of dreams in the study of human transformation. Initially the task was seen as an investigation into the use of dreams as a means of monitoring the stages of psychological and spiritual transformation that people undergo during a period of solo, silent retreat. Whilst transformation is a relatively new subject within the field of psychology, at least as it is defined in the glossary of terms (Appendix I), dreams have attracted our attention for thousands of years and indeed today they are still the subject of many a research thesis, particularly in the psychological field. However, as the Literature Review in this study suggests, little or no attention has been paid to the idea of studying human transformation through the medium of dreams.

As human transformation is a subjective experience, it would seem that a medium such as dreaming is a more suitable mode to reflect the subject's inner experiences of transformation than, say, questioning people about their experience. Furthermore, a series of transformational dreams may well give the researcher an opportunity to look more objectively at the dream data of the research subject than has hitherto been recognised - as a way of observing how the dreamer's dreams are changing during the process of transformation. The idea originated before this study was undertaken, whilst the researcher gathered his own personal dream data over several years as a first step in studying the ability of dreams to reflect one's personal experience of transformation (Hamilton, 2000a).

The current research work has been undertaken to document the dreams recorded during a psycho-spiritual transformation process as reported by the retreatants and other participants. The majority of dreams were drawn from retreatants, although two long-term naturalistic studies of dreams were also included. The researcher's own dreams on retreat, and subsequent experiences of guiding people on retreat whilst

tracking their dreams, were not included, although they formed a foundation basis of personal experience with which the current dream data could be compared.

The interest in and importance of dreams to the researcher is acknowledged, being based on his clinical experience of dream work in the psychotherapeutic setting, where dreams can be an important source of insight and guidance for both the client and the therapist. In addition, the researcher's own background has a long and extensive involvement in Sufism, and thus forms a large part of his interest in exploring the nature of such a human transformation process. The Sufi Order he trained in specialises in spiritual retreats, but not in dreams or psychological work, whereas some other Sufi Orders (which are reviewed in the literature search) place a great emphasis on dreams in the spiritual path. However, whilst Sufism has been the primary source of the researcher's spiritual influences, it is by no means the only one. His personal journey has taken him through a wide range of studies and spiritual practice, including Christian mysticism, Kabbala, Tibetan Buddhist studies as well as a familiarity with the teaching and practice of the Vedantic tradition.

Thus the researcher's overriding interest has been to explore the nature of religious experience with a view, if possible, to ascertain any underlying common features and themes. Furthermore, personal experience during his own psychological studies, training and practice have contributed to the researcher's belief that an innate religious nature exists in the human being, but that its expression is diverse, ranging from pantheism to atheism and agnosticism, to polytheism and monotheism as well as religions that have no theistic basis.

The researcher's own beliefs (and biases) are therefore based on his own personal experience of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. The effects of this will be discussed in the literature search (where gaps in knowledge are missing and where the researcher has had to rely on his own experiences of the psycho-spiritual transformation process as a starting point when reviewing the dream texts of the research participants), research methods (where the researcher was involved in guiding some of the retreats) and in assessing the dreams material.

The dream data is based therefore only on recorded personal experience, and as such is subjective. However, as in all heuristic research studies (Moustakas, 1990), one looks for more general patterns in the evidence by comparing the research results with one's own experience as well as with other sources, thereby increasing the relative objectivity of the work. Thus in the qualitative research process, the researcher is exploring the human experience of psycho-spiritual transformation for the possible existence of several levels of consciousness through the medium of dreams. This phenomenon has previously been described in a number of traditional Tibetan Yogic and Sufic texts. The results and conclusions are therefore not a claim for the discovery of an objective truth, but they clearly represent a 'subjective truth', experienced by the participants concerned. The researcher however will show that the phenomenon warrants serious consideration.

Most studies of human transformation have focused on the nature of the research subject's experience through questioning and eliciting answers. This method has also been used repeatedly as a way of studying the role of dreams in reflecting human experience (Moustakas, 1994; Biela, 1994; Howe, 1991; Unkrur, 1997). Transformation has also been studied by monitoring the abilities of the subject's personality before and after their experience of transformation (Lambert, 1989; McLeod, 1994). However, these methods ignore the subject's inner experience and inner world which, when trying to understand what a human transformation experience is and what it does, misses perhaps the most important part, i.e. that of human experience (Hubble, Duncan & Mider, 1999).

The method of eliciting answers through questioning people about their dreams therefore suffers from two weaknesses. Firstly, this method relies upon the eliciting of an experience that has typically occurred quite some time ago. There is therefore a gap in time between the researching of the dream and the questioning of the subject about the experience. Much of the reality and detail of the dream is lost during this period. To remedy this the researcher needs to interview the dreamer almost immediately after they have recorded their dreams which may (or may not) reflect the recording of a dream during the night or in the morning following the dream, which may (or may not) reflect something of the inner psychic changes that took place during the day and even that are taking place whilst the research subject is dreaming!

Secondly, by questioning the research subject, the researcher may inadvertently lead the person away from their experience or even influence them in a way that changes their experience. However open-ended or objective a question is put, even on paper, it is not the same as the research subject recording their immediate experience, in their own way, without anyone being present or questioning them.

The setting or context for the recording of dreams in the present study is that of a solo, silent, spiritual retreat. Indeed, spiritual retreat has been used as a means of spiritual transformation since the early Greek and early Egyptian civilisations (Edinger, 1991). Similarly, the Vedic scriptures of the Hindu tradition (Misra, 1980), going back several thousand years, refer to retreats as a means of spiritual transformation. More recently, however, spiritual retreats have been used as a means of human transformation and not simply as a means of evoking spiritual experiences. Human transformation, if it is seen as a complete inner psychic change, implies psychological (mental/emotional), spiritual (belief systems change) and cognitive change (changes in the ways we perceive ourselves and our problems, and in the way we see the world). In fact, over the past forty years some retreats in the Sufi tradition have been adapted from the exclusive strict traditional format of sleep and food fasting to enable more people to undergo a less demanding psycho-spiritual transformation experience (Retreat Manual, 1985). The criteria for the retreat are set out in the Retreat Design.

This study has therefore chosen the setting of a personal, silent, spiritual retreat to be the focus for the investigation of the role of dreams in the study of human transformation. Spiritual retreats have clear advantages over the study of people in psychotherapy or in other transformation activities since they basically remove the daily influences of stress, interpersonal conflicts, noise, conversation, reading, television and computers, all of which appear in our dreams and tend to mask or hinder personal transformation (Nielsen & Powell, 1992). By contrast, the retreat can be a vessel or a human laboratory for undergoing a personal experience of transformation by having the retreatant focus on spiritual practices interspersed with rest and a simple diet, i.e. given such a context the transformation process is more likely to be clearly observed. In a similar project, research subjects were asked to spend varying amounts of time floating silently in an 'isolation tank'. Their

experiences were recorded immediately afterwards. One of the findings from this type of investigation was that the research subjects quickly experienced many changes in their consciousness in the silent, womb-like setting. They also recorded visual and imaginal inner experiences (Lilly, 1980). The researcher has also noted in his experience of guiding spiritual retreats that retreatants tend to remember their dreams with relative ease, compared to their difficulties in remembering dreams in everyday life. It would seem therefore that the person's imagination is also freed up to clearly reflect their inner psychic experiences whilst in isolation as opposed to being preoccupied with the remembering of images and experiences from the outside world, when they are outside the retreat setting.

Of course, the question naturally arises as to whether dreams in the retreat setting are acting as a compensation for the lack of any external stimulus. However, it has been noted by the researcher that a) the complexity of the initial dreams gives way to simpler, clearer and shorter dreams as the retreat progresses, b) in many cases the number of dreams slowly diminishes as the retreat progresses, and c) if anything the number of dreams remembered on retreat begins to diminish if the retreatant undergoes repeated retreats year after year (one retreat every year) (Hamilton, 1998). In fact in some cases, there were periods when the retreatant was deeply immersed in an experience of 'inner emptiness' with little or no mental activity present. This may be the result of the freeing up of the mind from external ties to the world.

As a result, spiritual retreats were chosen for this research as the context for an investigation as to whether dreams could act as a means of monitoring the process of a psycho-spiritual human transformation.

1.1 Background

The heuristic origins of the research concerning the role of dreams in human transformation go back to 1988 when the researcher decided to systematically record his dreams on a personal spiritual retreat lasting thirty-three days. Between days sixteen and twenty-six he noticed a series of dreams that could be interpreted as being related to the anima figure, so well documented in Carl Jung's psychological works (Jung, 1953).

However, the qualities of the anima figures seemed to closely match the quality of the meditation experiences of the previous day, i.e. the qualities of the women or female images he encountered in the dreams at night seemed to reflect the quality of conscious awareness he was able to access during meditation the previous day. It then occurred to the researcher that whenever he experienced a change in consciousness (as the retreat progressed) the changing ‘anima figures’ in the dreams seemed to reflect or be related to these changes. Typically, the changes in consciousness involved an increasing subtle awareness of his inner world, accompanied by a particular mood or subtle feeling. On reflection, the researcher realised that he had been experiencing several distinct shifts in his consciousness, going from level to level with each successive level becoming more and more subtle.

The phenomenon repeated itself in subsequent annual retreats. The researcher then also began to observe the same phenomenon occurring in the other retreatants’ dreams, whilst guiding them on their retreats. This retreat dream phenomenon has not been investigated, interpreted or discussed by Jung, post-Jungians or by any other psychotherapists in recent times.

1.2 The tradition of studying dreams

The subject of dreams goes back thousands of years and has been acknowledged in the Indian, Egyptian, Greek, American Indian, Bushman, Aborigine and Senoi cultures as a direct source of guidance. In Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism it has been a source of spiritual inspiration, whilst in the 20th century it has attracted much attention in scientific and psychological circles. However, although theories of dreams and dreaming are as old as human consciousness itself, few research studies have focused on dreams and spiritual transformation. Furthermore, it appears that almost nothing has been published concerning dreams on retreat.

Although several spiritual traditions speak of the use of dreams in spiritual guidance, no spiritual tradition or culture offers a theory of dreams which fully explains the process of personal and spiritual transformation, whether experienced by people on retreat or simply in everyday life. Neither is there any psychological or spiritual

topography which describes the corresponding changes in the levels of consciousness accessed by people on retreat and/or during a period of psycho-spiritual transformation in terms of dreams.

In undertaking this study, several strands in the researcher's background had to be in place. To start with, a review of the subject demands a familiarity with several traditional psycho-spiritual disciplines that are used on retreat, as well as a careful review of the psychological theories and spiritual literature that would be helpful in explaining the subjective experiences depicted in the retreat dreams. Jung's classic work on *Psychology and Alchemy* (Jung, 1968), however, which greatly influenced the development of analytical psychology, lays the foundations for the understanding of the transformative process, as recorded by clients' dreams. Secondly, the subject of dreams as a monitor of personal and spiritual transformation also requires considerable personal experience of both one's own solo retreat process, and in accompanying other retreatants during their process. Thirdly, a familiarity with and insight into one's own personal dreams on retreat and how this has influenced one's studies and ideas concerning the inner dimensions of the human psyche is also necessary. Furthermore, if we are to establish some validity in the maps or levels of human consciousness that can be accessed and how all this is reflected in people's dreams, then information from the retreats and any other comparable field of knowledge that can predict or explain such experiences must be drawn together and compared so as to see if there is agreement, if this subject is to be taken seriously. To this end, research studies of human experience pioneered by Clarke Moustakas (Moustakas, 1990) when investigating human subjective experiences have opened up the possibility of using dreams as a vehicle for drawing the diverse fields of knowledge required together through a heuristic approach to the study of dreams on retreat.

1.3 Dreams and Consciousness

Consciousness of the dream in this context refers to the totality of impressions, thoughts and feelings remembered from the dream experience. However, consciousness as defined in the glossary section needs further discussion in order that it may be linked to the subject of dreams. For instance, when considering Eastern

spiritual traditions such as Sufism or Buddhism, it is apparent that the terms dreams and consciousness are related in a way that is unfamiliar to our Western way of thinking, i.e. that the dream state of a spiritual aspirant in these traditions is said to mirror the state of conscious awareness of the aspirant. In other words, the symbolism and the degree of clarity in the dream as well as the dream narrative all indicate a particular state of conscious realisation. There comes a point, however, when the aspirant's dreams are said to cease, showing neither imagery nor narrative, leaving the dreamer conscious only of light and no sense of self. This is said to be the ultimate state of conscious realisation achievable through the dream state (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1992). By contrast, most Western psychological and scientific views of dreams and consciousness have revolved around the notion that waking and dreaming are simply different states of consciousness (Penrose, 2002). A small exceptional step in the direction of the Eastern view however has been taken by some psychotherapists who tend to view the dream state as indicating that a particular unconscious aspect of the psyche is being revealed or is becoming more consciously present to the dreamer through the dream (Freud, 1965; Jung, 1963; Lunt, 1990; Storr, 1983).

Generally speaking, however, consciousness, from a scientific and psychological point of view, is considered to be a primary function and activity of the brain itself. The clinical view defines consciousness as the brain's interpretation and integration of all the information made available to it at any given time (Mahowald, Woods & Schenck, 1998).

Recently, however, several scientific thinkers such as Roger Penrose, the renowned British physicist, have suggested re-defining our conventional scientific understanding of the word consciousness to include not only the computational conventional thinking of the mind, but also the subjective states in which the usual laws of time and space are transcended.

“Physicists have made profound progress towards an understanding of the workings of the physical world. However, our present scientific understanding still falls a long way short of its ultimate goal. Most particularly, the phenomenon of consciousness cannot be accommodated within the framework of present-day physical theory

... This runs contrary to a certain common perception of the implications of a scientific viewpoint. According to this perception, all aspects of mentality (including conscious awareness) are merely features of the computational activity of the brain; consequently, electronic computers should also be capable of consciousness, and would conjure up this quality as soon as they acquire sufficient computational power and are programmed in an appropriate way. There are sound scientific reasons for disbelieving this perception, arguing that the conscious aspects of our minds are not explicable in computational terms and moreover that conscious minds can find no home within our present-day scientific world-view. Nevertheless, it is not my contention that we should look outside science for an understanding of mentality, merely that existing science has not the richness to achieve what is required.” (Penrose, 2002, p.1)

The following dream by a prominent American mathematician, Leonard Eugene Dickson, may illustrate the point:

“His mother and her sister, who, at school, were rivals in geometry, had spent a long and futile evening over a certain problem. During the night, his mother dreamed of it and began developing the solution in a loud and clear voice; her sister, hearing that, arose and took notes. On the following morning in class, she happened to have the right solution which Dickson’s mother failed to know.” (Hadamard, 1954, p.7)

Shainberg (cited in Hiles & Peat, 1987) also speaks of a new paradigm in which our consciousness is likened to the organisation and movement of energy in matter, and that beyond this lies a ‘higher mind’ or implicate order, inherent in matter and space.

“In this new paradigm mind is implicated because it is an expression of the ordering implied in the whole. Mind is not in the brain - it is enfolded over the whole of matter. Consciousness and language, like will and attention, are movements of the whole, parts of the explicate reflecting that implicate. The order is expressed in the fact that there are minds - and in the fact that these minds organise reality. It is also expressed by the fact that matter is. Its

existence is organisation of energy. The unity of this order is displayed in the core processes we know as the relationship between mind and matter. Both mind and matter are projections of a higher order of reality. Briggs and Peat write:

‘Thus as these energies enter consciousness through the sense organs, it is, in each instant, the whole which consciousness encounters, which consciousness (and perception) is ... and processes of the brain are a holographic imprint of the whole. Therefore both the order of consciousness and the order of matter, observer and observed, are projections and expressions of the implicate order where the two are one and the same. Each is a mirror reflecting itself. Mind is a subtle form of matter, matter is a grosser form of mind.’” (Hiles & Peat, 1987, p.396)

The psychiatrist DeBall goes as far as suggesting that consciousness is a function of both our physical and metaphysical natures:

“Consciousness is best viewed as a fundamental force - like gravity or electromagnetic waves. Its effects are readily experienced but what it is made of and the actual mechanism that give rise to it remain a mystery.

... The implications of this are important for research. It reminds us not to forget that we are bi-dimensional creatures whose conscious experience is a function of both our physical and metaphysical natures. Scientists who believe in such a dimension would be encouraged to put their efforts into defining the metaphysical contributions to conscious experience.” (DeBall, 2002, p.5)

As a transpersonal alternative, Ken Wilber (1977), a psychologist, has mapped out the field of consciousness into a spectrum of possible conscious states ranging from the ordinary waking states right through to the states of consciousness described by the mystics.

Overall, many psychological and scientific viewpoints have begun to consider the possibility that the many subjective experiences we undergo both in dreaming and in

waking may reflect the different possible states of human consciousness (Ullman, 1998).

Just as there are divisions in the physicist's world between subjective and objective knowledge, so in the field of psychology, for example, the approaches to consciousness are divided between the objective methods used in cognitive psychology and behaviourism and the introspective methods of William James (1976), Freud and Jung. This thesis is concerned with the introspective realms, it is a search for an inherent order within our subjective states of consciousness.

1.4 Dreams and the psycho-spiritual transformation of the human psyche

The second important term that needs further discussion at the outset is psycho-spiritual transformation.

In reviewing the history of psychology, it is evident how Eastern and Western cultures have separated out, the latter splitting spirituality from psychology in the pursuit of 'scientific psychology' (Ankrah 2002). Recent trends in psychotherapy, however, and in particular, transpersonal psychotherapy, have attempted to include the experience of personal transformation not only as the object but also the subject of its study. As an example, Assagioli (1986), a psychiatrist and psychotherapist, had the opportunity to observe many clients who, in his view, were experiencing a psycho-spiritual awakening. Unusually, he distinguished these cases from the experience of psychosis, which would require a very different form of treatment. A psycho-spiritual awakening, according to Assagioli, has four critical stages:

- crisis preceding the spiritual awakening
- crisis caused by the spiritual awakening
- reactions following the spiritual awakening
- phases of the transformative process begin to emerge during which the person has spiritual experiences of other realities.

All four stages are part of the awakening process. The experience could also begin spontaneously, without apparent cause, thereby causing a crisis. By contrast, people experiencing psychosis did not undergo their transformative phases and instead simply became dysfunctional.

More recently, Stanislav and Christina Grof (1989) have coined the term ‘spiritual emergency’ for such a transformative experience, listing a variety of phenomena that accompany such a crisis, as well as a variety of ways in which the crisis can occur. Sudden shock, personal illness, near-death experiences, are but two of many of the apparent origins of the crisis. In conventional psychiatry, however, and even in some of the more traditional psychodynamic approaches to psychotherapy this experience is pathologised as a form of psychosis, which needs medical treatment. Grof insists that with therapeutic support and guidance, a genuine psycho-spiritual awakening can take place that is life enhancing and results in greater long-term psychological stability and personal meaning to life.

What has been discussed above could be classed as a type of psycho-spiritual transformation experienced ‘off-retreat’. However, the same experiences can sometimes also occur in the context of a spiritual retreat which has long been the principal means of experiencing a psycho-spiritual transformation, in Sufism (Chittick, 1998), in Buddhism (Dalai Lama, 1997), in Hinduism (Misra, 1980) and in Christianity (de Nicholas, 1996). Traditionally, the aspirant subjects himself or herself to a range of ascetic disciplines and devotional exercises. These would include fasting, silence, celibacy as well as prayers and meditation in the day and the night. Retreat guides or a spiritual director would visit the retreatant from time to time to assist them on their inner journey. However, it is only in the Sufi and Buddhist spiritual traditions that dreams are also used by the retreat guide or mentor as a means of tracking the spiritual development of the retreatant, i.e. spiritual exercises are given, partly as a result of their interpretation of the retreatant’s dream. This thesis attempts therefore to use the phenomena of dreams as a way of bridging the inner and outer conscious experiences whilst the transformation process is unfolding. It could occur within the retreat setting, or off retreat.

The term psycho-spiritual transformation will be used in this dissertation therefore to describe a process of transformation of the human psyche which involves

- 1) a profound experience of change of consciousness (an experience of a higher state of consciousness - this could be phrased alternatively as a spiritual experience or a metaphysical experience).
- 2) a re-evaluation of personal beliefs as a result of the experience
- 3) a change in the personal perspective on life - greater insights into our problems and ourselves and an increased clarity of mind.
- 4) a greater sense of self acceptance and inner centredness (as opposed to selfishness) - which leads to increased inner strength, independence and other valuable human qualities such as patience, peacefulness, understanding etc.

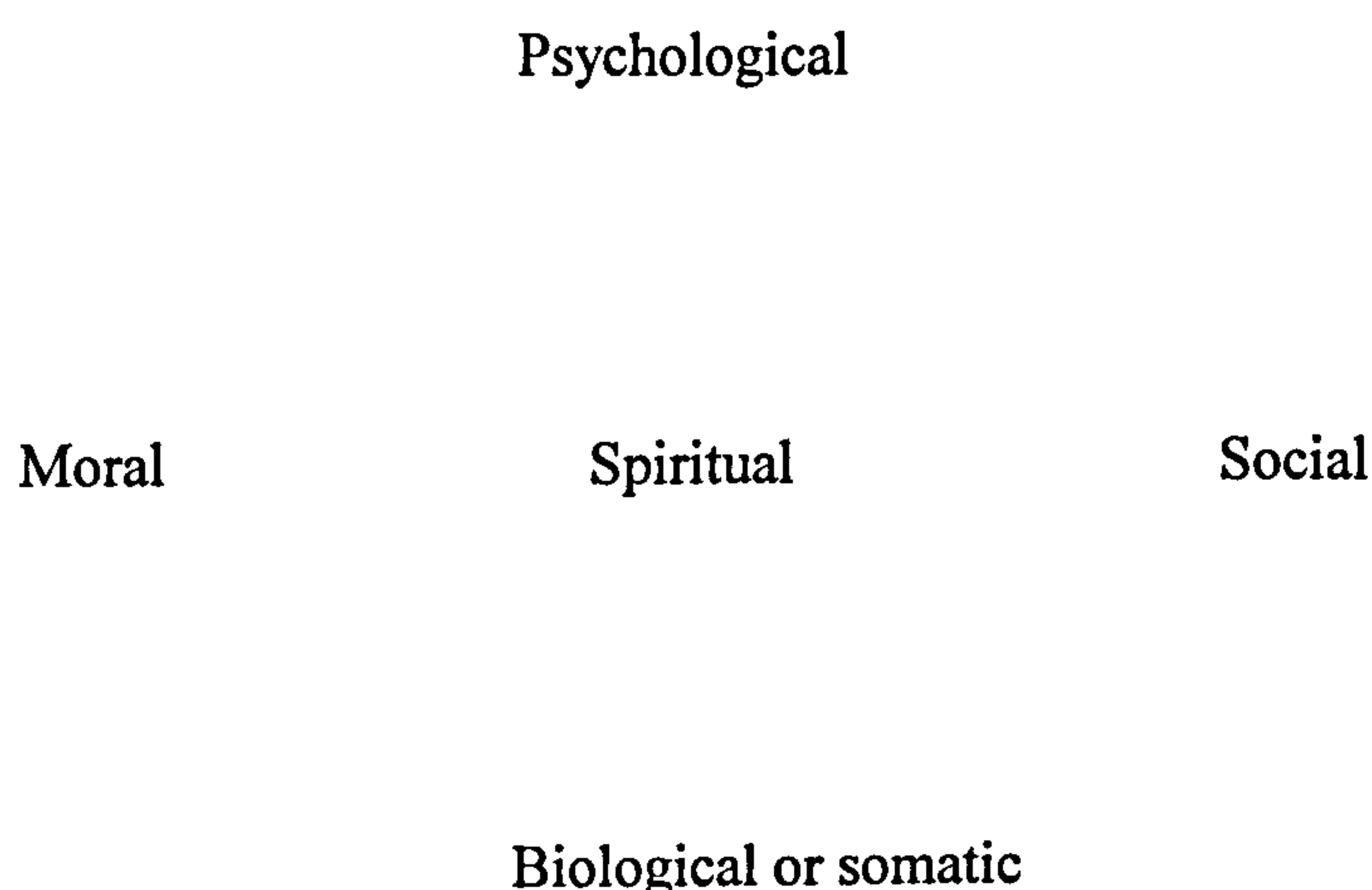
1.5 The spiritual perspective, the dimensions of human experience and Transpersonal Psychology

Historically, human experience has included the spiritual and religious, the moral, the social, the biological or somatic and the psychological dimensions. Furthermore, the Western perspective has tended to explain human experiences in terms of at least one of these dimensions, e.g. scientists conceptualise the theory and practice of medicine in terms of the biological dimension, sociologists and psychologists conceptualise human behaviour in terms of the social and the psychological dimensions.

Increasingly, however, contemporary efforts in psychiatry and professional psychology are adopting a biopsychosocial model in which human behaviour is conceptualised in terms of all three dimensions of the human experience. Although the social dimension is not accounted for in this thesis because of the emphasis on withdrawal from the world on retreats, this study takes the position that the five dimensions of human experience (psychological, social, moral, biological and spiritual) are inter-related, with the spiritual dimension being the foundation of the dimensions of human experience (see Figure 1). This may be called the spiritual perspective.

However, the spiritual perspective does not necessarily involve any formal affiliation with any religious tradition, although it does assume that all human beliefs, affects and behaviours are associated with a basic spiritual drive and desire for self-transcendence (Maslow, 1970). In his hierarchy of motivation, Maslow puts the spiritual drive at the apex of human motivation, and yet this drive could also be seen as underpinning all the preceding motivations, e.g. the instincts could be viewed as a drive for life, an expression of spirit.

Figure 1: The spiritual dimension as the foundation and origin of human experience



Similarly, this spiritual perspective is evident in the work of Wilber (1977, 1995, 1999; Wilber, Engler & Brown, 1986) who proposes a spectrum model of human consciousness as the basis for understanding human development and transformation. Here the developing child can evolve from a simple, primitive state (in which the instincts are predominant) called pre-personal consciousness, to an adult, more sophisticated mental state called personal consciousness and finally as an adult possibly even achieving a mystical state of consciousness in which the human self begins to be transcendent. In this model, Wilber acknowledges the presence of the dormant spiritual consciousness at birth, likening the successive developing conscious states in the human being to a series of Chinese boxes, i.e. each state carries within it the awareness of the previous state as well as the potential for that which follows it. Thus it would seem from these models that the spiritual perspective implies the presence of the spirit in all the dimensions of human experience. Consequently, all

dimensions must be inter-related. The works of Maslow, Wilber and many others have now evolved into a new field of study, Transpersonal Psychology, which focuses primarily on all the possible variations of experience of human consciousness and includes all rational and irrational experiences. It is the exploration of human consciousness and the contents of that consciousness. Furthermore, if consciousness involves all the dimensions of human experience: cognitive, affective, moral, somatic and spiritual, then the greater the awareness is of the many other levels of consciousness, the greater the likelihood of psychological and spiritual change and development (Cortright, 1997; West, 2000).

Equally in transpersonal psychotherapy, the spiritual perspective underpins the therapeutic work. For example, in helping the client to engage with a more subtle level of consciousness in themselves (of which they are not usually conscious) a key can be found to help them change and grow. Similarly, on retreat, the retreatant has to engage with the different dimensions or levels of consciousness in order to change and grow. Indeed, it is the growing awareness of the spiritual dimension (the subtler levels of consciousness) experienced by clients in therapy and by retreatants on retreat that permits the transformation process to proceed.

To sum up, the transpersonal paradigm seriously challenges the distinction between psychology (and psychotherapy) and spirituality, science and spirit, and the sacred and the profane. It insists that the roots of the psyche are spiritual, that the basis of consciousness is a spiritual reality. Finally, it offers a more fully integrative and inclusive view of human experience than other psychological systems (Cortright, 1997).

1.6 The epistemological position taken in the study

Having experienced many retreats over the years, and having personally experienced the stages of a retreat as well as the levels of consciousness therein, and having observed these phenomena in his dreams as the retreats progressed, the researcher therefore embarked on this study with the awareness that he already had developed a well-formed personal point of view on the subject. Further he made allowances for the possibility that his experience could simply have been a unique, personal one.

The researcher's interest therefore was to see whether these experiences would stand up to the careful scrutiny of a more formal, organised research approach, i.e. an empirical study of a particular human experience. The understanding of the word empirical is defined here as being closer to its etymological roots, i.e. to include all human experience. Thus the researcher began by acknowledging that one of the limitations of this study would be his personal bias, and that ways would have to be found to try to limit its impact on the retreatants.

One of the first tasks, therefore, was to collect retreat dreams in a variety of settings and to use a variety of retreat guides - ensuring that all had the same instructions - and to include a sufficient number of retreatants so as to ensure a reasonable variation in age and cultural background. All in all, the idea was to gather a considerable amount of dream data, despite the variations of culture, age and guide, and to see if there were any themes that were common to all the retreatants' experience.

Clearly, the nature of the research topic required qualitative research methods, of which the heuristic approach (Moustakas, 1990; Douglas & Moustakas, 1985; Braud & Anderson, 1998) seemed ideal as it allowed for the researcher's personal experience to be taken into account along with those of the retreatants. The phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994; Braud & Anderson, 1998) would also be important in that the dreams experienced on retreat and any other phenomena experienced could be regarded as providing detailed descriptions of a very personal experience.

Initially, the intention of this thesis was to investigate the role of dreams as a means of monitoring the stages of psychological and spiritual transformation that people undergo during a guided, solo, silent, spiritual retreat. However, it soon became apparent that a second parallel task was to see if dreams could monitor or mirror the retreatant's experiences of the subtler levels of conscious awareness on such a retreat. As the research question developed it became apparent that dreams recorded outside the retreat setting during a period of psychological and spiritual transformation would also need to be gathered and analysed in the same manner as the retreat dreams, with a view to seeing if the same underlying transformative process was evident in a different setting.

The ultimate aim of this research is therefore to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the psychological and spiritual aspects of the human psyche during a period of psycho-spiritual transformation. This could enable a new transpersonal model to be constructed that for the first time is based primarily on dreams research.

1.7 Overview of the thesis

The first task involved a search covering both Eastern and Western literature. What was significant, however, was that there was little common ground between the various Western psychological dream theories, let alone between Eastern and Western ideas on dreams. It was also evident that no attempt had been made by Western psychology to incorporate non-Western theories of dreams. Nevertheless, a significant foundation stone, laid by Jung on behalf of mainstream Western psychology through his classic, 'Psychology and Alchemy' (Jung, 1968) stood out. However, although this text has greatly influenced the understanding of the transformation process in psychotherapy, it still left a large gap between the psychological and mystical perspectives concerning this process. Specifically, Jung focused on the psychological changes that took place in his clients, by interpreting their experiences in psychological terms. Many of these experiences might be viewed differently however from the mystical perspective. One obvious conclusion was that any research that further bridged the gap between these Eastern and Western perspectives and between the various dream theories could make a substantial contribution to the field of psychotherapy.

A question arose therefore: Could the study of dreams be used as a bridge between Western and Eastern approaches to transformation? Could dreams be a key element in helping to bridge the gulf between Western and Eastern dream theories? For example, the spiritual traditions of Buddhism and Sufism base their dream theories on the experiences of spiritual transformation during a spiritual retreat, where dreams are used as a guide to the retreatant's process. Similarly, in the West, psychotherapists use dream material from the client during the therapeutic treatment, which is meant to be a period in which psychological change takes place.

It seemed therefore that given the context of a spiritual retreat in the study, and if a spiritual model of retreat was employed in which guidance throughout each step of the process was offered, together with the therapeutic support and insight that the Western psychological models offer, a way of combining the Eastern and Western perspectives might be possible. Further, a way of monitoring both the psycho-spiritual transformation process and the experience of the subtler levels of self might be realised.

Possibly the key element, common to both the psychological and spiritual approaches, would be the monitoring of the transformation process through the use of dreams. Dreams could give the research a way in or entrée to the study of human transformation.

At the same time, dreams would also be used therapeutically as a means of helping the retreatant work through the very personal obstacles that are holding up the process of transformation. Finally, by combining the different approaches, a more comprehensive understanding of the psycho-spiritual transformation process could be gleaned through the use of dreams. Thus, Chapter two, the literature review, looked in detail at the various Eastern and Western dream theories and took note of more recent developments in dream research that relate to this research topic.

The retreat process and the retreat setting are also described in Chapter two. In order to understand the transformative process on retreat that a retreatant experiences, considerable familiarity with a number of traditional psycho-spiritual disciplines that underpin the retreat, is demanded. Therefore, a careful review of the psychological theories and spiritual literature was undertaken to help in explaining the subjective experiences depicted in retreat dreams. Jung's writing on dreams, Psychology and Alchemy, and some of the Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist teachings, alluded to earlier, are examples of such psycho-spiritual disciplines and spiritual literature.

Research Methods are discussed in Chapter three. To establish some validity concerning the phenomena of levels of consciousness experienced on (and off) retreat and how these are reflected in the retreatant's dreams, then information from the

retreatant concerning their dreams and retreat experience must be combined with input from the retreat guide as researcher and co-researcher. Further, these research data, together with other relevant fields of knowledge, namely Jungian studies on the alchemical process of transformation in the human psyche and Tibetan and Sufi dream theories, must all show agreement to a considerable degree with each other in explaining this phenomenon - if it is to be taken seriously at all. Although recent studies of personal human experiences have been pioneered by Moustakas (1990), who originated the heuristic approach as a tool for studying human subjective experience, the retreatant's experience of several levels of consciousness requires research methods that go beyond simple subjective descriptions, as the heuristic method suggests. Hence a variety of subjective qualitative methods were first combined, using the heuristic research approach as a basis, and then compared with a more objective, quantitative method to enhance the validity of the research data.

In Chapter four the research design is discussed. This describes how the subjects were chosen for the retreat, the retreat environment, the daily schedule and the method of dream recording.

Chapters five, six, seven and eight analyse all the dream data using the qualitative method of thematic analysis. From this a series of templates for each level of consciousness, which is renamed as each level of self, was constructed. A quantitative colour analysis of the dreams was used throughout each of these chapters as a comparison with and cross-check of the thematic analysis. The similarities between the results found in Chapters five to eight are then discussed.

In Chapter nine, the discussion reviews the Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist literature on dreams and compares these texts with the results of the analysis of the dream data, resulting in a triangulation of research methods. The results of the analysis are also discussed. Ethical issues, application of the research and strengths and weaknesses are considered in turn. This Chapter also discusses possible alternative viewpoints and criticism of the results. Finally, the transformation model was then used to propose a new theory of dreams.

Chapter ten lays out the conclusions of this research study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction and overview

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of dreams in human transformation. Surprisingly, although the practice of psychotherapy assumes that some degree of change or transformation in the client's inner world will take place as a result of the therapeutic encounter, the subject of the human transformation process has received little consideration as a core topic or core theme in any of the psychotherapy theories. However, the psychological theories of Jung represent an outstanding exception to this trend. Indeed, Jung attempted to study the subject of human transformation in much the way we understand plant metamorphosis or the stages of transformation from a silkworm to a butterfly. Thus, from a transpersonal perspective, this was a significant forward leap given that transformation touches on several crucial and inter-related themes, i.e. consciousness and the evolution of the human being, the evolution of our personal perspective, the finding of purpose in our lives, as well as the evolution of societal consciousness.

Therefore, in order to understand the role of dreams in human transformation, a review of several subjects was deemed necessary to fulfil the task of a literature review. This included Jung's writings on the Alchemy of Transformation and its applicability to the modern psychotherapeutic context, Western psychological dream theories, research and literature on altered states of consciousness, Eastern approaches to dreams and a review of the theory behind the role of spiritual retreats in human transformation.

Initially a review of the popular psychological dream literature and the major Western contributions to the psychotherapeutic literature on dreams in the 20th century was undertaken. However, this did not include transpersonal psychotherapy, which has yet to provide its own dream theory, being a latecomer to dream literature and dream research, although recent activity in this area has provided a wealth of interesting

information thereby suggesting that it could make a substantial contribution to the field in the near future. Hence a summary of the results of recent transpersonal research into dreamwork is included separately in the review of Western approaches to dreamwork.

The literature review then proceeds with a review of the relevant research on the phenomena of dreams and dreaming reported in the American Journal of Association for the Study of Dreams. These reports give a sense of the significance and extent of dream research today. This completed the review of Western approaches to dreams through research and theorising.

The next task was to arrive at a basic understanding of the spectrum of consciousness that is accessed by the many creative geniuses, mystics and people who have experienced a profound psycho-spiritual transformation. To begin with, therefore, a review was undertaken of a variety of religious and metaphysical texts that dealt specifically with altered states of consciousness, in other words, with the experience of subtler levels of consciousness other than the waking consciousness. This included literature on altered states of consciousness, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which describe the subtle levels of consciousness in great detail, the Tibetan Book of the Dead - including the stages of dying and description of the after-death state, a variety of Sufi texts on the subject and St John of the Cross' inner journey in his 'Dark Night of the Soul'.

Two detailed reviews of Eastern approaches to dreamwork, Tibetan Yoga of the dream state and dreams in the Sufi tradition, were also included to emphasise the metaphysical aspects involved in using dreams to monitor spiritual transformation.

This was followed by a review of Carl Jung's writings on Alchemy as a psychological process and his ideas on the role of dreams in the psycho-spiritual transformation process.

It was also decided to include a review of the subject of the theory of spiritual retreats and the role they play in transformation. This was thought to help the reader to better understand the research design and research methods used.

Finally, the review included a computer search of psychological abstracts on Dreams, Retreats and Dreams on Retreat. Professional psychology journals were also reviewed as well as a literary search for books/texts on the same subjects. However, although there are many mass publication popular books on dreams, there was surprisingly little information on dreams and transformation let alone dreams on retreat. Secondly, even though dreams have played a significant role in the psychological theories of Adler, Jung and Freud there were few references or mentions of dreams in terms of differentiated levels of consciousness. Jung does focus on dreams, but only in terms of the process of individuation. Most of the more serious books on dreams have been published since the turn of the twentieth century, but again few references to the current topic are to be found. Current dream research from a transpersonal perspective seems to focus either on analysing phenomena in dreams or, in a few cases, looking at isolated psychological processes using dream material, again from a transpersonal perspective.

2.1 Psychological theories of dreams

2.1.1 Popular psychology dream literature

It seemed pertinent, as part of the literature search, to also review popular psychology texts on dreams, given that popular psychology is undoubtedly one important area where the meaning of dreams and dream interpretation is discussed. Unfortunately, these texts tend to present the subject in terms of ‘Understanding Dreams and fulfilling your potential’ as a way of increasing their sales potential, rather than providing any kind of in-depth discussion on the subject. Generally speaking, they suffer from an inflexibility in their approach in that the symbolic significance of the dream images are defined briefly in a dictionary-type format, making no allowance for the personal context of the dream.

However, a few texts stand out, providing a more serious contribution to the understanding of dreams. Anne Faraday (1974) makes an important point by warning of the dangers of dream interpretation when the therapist interprets dreams according to their own theoretical perspective. Her book, ‘The Dream Game’, emphasises the

personal nature and value of dreams for the dreamer to explore and understand themselves. Fontana (1995) follows a similar theme, and includes a review of the many approaches to dream analysis, including that of the transpersonal. Garfield (1992) and Mallon (2000) speak movingly of the healing capacity of dreams in the process of psychotherapy when the dreamer is clearly faced with their own darkness. Carlos Castaneda looks at dreams as a type of shamanistic journey; however, he puts the emphasis on developing an awareness of the dream, whilst dreaming. This is commonly known as lucid dreaming (Castaneda, 1993). Boa (1994), in interviewing Marie-Louise von Franz, popularises the Jungian approach to dreaming by making Jung's ideas very accessible, readable and interesting. Shohet (1985) looks at the impact of dreams upon a group of people when they share their dreams. Thurston (1990) looks at the remarkable capacity of dreams to be able to sometimes predict future events in our lives. He calls these 'psychic dreams'. Cirlot's (1962) text on dream symbolism is impressive for its thoroughness and extensive range of sources for the meaning of each symbol.

One exceptional book by Garfield (1979) gives a remarkable personal account of her dream experiences, recorded over forty years. She reviews and interprets her dream process by tracking her psycho-spiritual journey from her painful early adolescent years through to her profound spiritual experiences described through her dream life, thirty years later. Apart from her dreams, the most relevant point in terms of this particular author is that her dreams revealed the accessing of increasingly subtle and profound levels of consciousness as her journey progressed.

Apart from Garfield (1979), there is little or no reference to dreams as part of a process (Boa and Mallon are exceptions) or whether dreams can reveal the presence of different levels of consciousness (Cayce, Castaneda, Fontana and Garfield refer briefly to this but do not explain or discuss the phenomenon in any depth). Thus, although personal meanings in dreams and the psychological aspects of dreams are dealt with, the themes of the levels of consciousness and dreams as a process of transformation are largely ignored. Popular psychology texts, as the title suggests, emphasise the phenomena of dreams and of their usefulness in everyday life.

2.1.2 A review of psychotherapy literature on dreams

A summary of the five major twentieth century dream theorists follows. This list includes the analytical psychologist Jung, the psychoanalyst Freud, the individual psychologist Alfred Adler, the prominent cognitive psychologist David Foulkes and the work of J. Allan Hobson, a neurophysiologist and professor of psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School. Reviews of two other psychotherapeutic approaches to dream interpretation, Phenomenological and Transpersonal, are also included, offering two recent yet significant contributions to the field. Dream theorists such as Boss (1977), an existential and phenomenological psychologist, and Frederick and Laura Perls (Shafton, 1995), the founders of Gestalt therapy, have been reviewed but as their contributions were less significant they have not been included in this summary review.

2.1.3 Experimental approaches to dream research

David Foulkes (Foulkes 1962; 1990; 1993), an experimental psychologist and prominent dream theorist, has been at the forefront of the study of dreams in cognitive psychology, a discipline that has often ignored the sleeping mind. His numerous laboratory studies are central to his larger understanding of presenting a scientific analysis of mental life and dreaming. While Foulkes is primarily interested in investigating the properties and function of mental processes, J. Allan Hobson, a neurophysiologist, has a more strictly biological and physiological interest in the brain chemistry that produces and affects the dreaming state. Hobson has developed the widely reviewed and controversial “activator-synthesis hypothesis” of dreaming, which regards dreaming as a form of psychosis, hence rejecting the idea that dreams can be interpreted in a rational way (Hobson, 1988). However, both Foulkes and Hobson, having trained in the positivistic scientific tradition endeavoured to conduct and present their research in the most empirical tone possible. Their writings, which reject the depth psychological understanding of dreams as described by Adler, Jung and Freud, as well as the Humanistic, Existential and Transpersonal approaches, of which the latter includes a spiritual dimension to the dream interpretation, have gained considerable recognition in scientific circles (Foulkes, 1996; Hobson, 2004). Paradoxically, during the past thirty years, several philosophers of science have

recognised and argued for a new “post-empirical” period in which traditional scientific methods are no longer uniformly venerated as the definitive basis for the production and testing of knowledge (Nielsen, 1990).

It also seems that the views of Hobson and Foulkes depend upon a purely objective way of looking at the phenomenon of sleeping, while at the same time they ignore the unavoidable presence of the personal in research and especially in research involving other human beings. Modern physics researchers encountered the same problem over sixty years ago when they discovered that in atomic particle research, the observer and observation influenced the object of study. This led to a totally new view, called Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, which attempts to account for the uncertainty in the position and time of the particles being observed. Perhaps a similar dilemma exists in current dream research whereby subjects must be woken up at the time of dreaming in order to confirm and relate their dream experiences, but, having woken up, they have already begun to lose their dream experience. Perhaps physics and psychology are beginning to move closer together now that they are encountering similar phenomena and dilemmas in their research. This point is taken up later in Chapter 9 under the heading of participatory research, a new paradigm.

To address the objective and subjective aspects of dream research, a different approach is being adopted for this research project by making use of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The experience of the observer as well as the one being observed was taken into account. It is therefore a conscious departure from the methodological principles of positivistic science, which emphasise a value-free, neutral, uninvolved approach.

2.1.4 Psychotherapeutic approaches to Dreams

Sigmund Freud was the first of the major analytical dream theorists (Freud, 1965; Grolnick, 1978). In 1913 he proposed a new structural model of the mind. This model determined the way dreams were interpreted. Freud proposed that the Id, the “great reservoir” of libido containing the instincts, represented thoughts and feelings that constantly sought a conscious means of expression. The Superego, which carries the rules, traditions, ideals and “conscience” that causes us to measure and judge

ourselves acts therefore as a prohibitive agency in the psyche. The ego, in part conscious, in part unconscious, which develops out of the Id, arbitrates between the demands of the Id (which seeks an outlet for pleasure) and the exigencies of the external world, operating under the reality principle and the expectation and judgements of the Superego. As a result, the ego develops and uses defence mechanisms that help to at least minimise this conflict or at best form a compromise between the pleasure seeking Id nature and the castigations of the Superego. In common with all other psychological activity, Freud saw dreams as being rooted in conflict: the latent dream thought seeking expression whilst the censorship forbade it; unconscious drives seeking gratification running up against the defence mechanisms which deny them. All conflict in dreams was interpreted as a conflict between the Id and the Superego.

Unlike Freud, Alfred Adler never produced a book focusing specifically on dream theory, and although his works considered dreams, his writings cannot be considered to contribute a fully-fledged dream theory. His Individual Psychology presented a model that formulated the theory of the inferiority complex, that is, the individual's lifelong striving for mastery over the physical and social environment compensated for the latter. He saw the striving to overcome as the principal driving force rather than Freud's 'libido'. This striving for superiority is the principal conditioning factor in our life according to Adler and serves as a fundamental originating principle of personality which Adler called one's "life style". Adler viewed dreams as extensions of one's waking orientation or life style (Adler, 1936; 1956). Dreams were interpreted as showing the way for the dreamer to overcome their sense of inferiority.

Jung (1954; 1965), by contrast with Freud, hypothesised that repressed instinctual contents could not constitute the whole of the unconscious. He divided the unconscious mind into personal and collective spheres. The personal unconscious was grounded in the personal experience of the individual. The collective unconscious on the other hand, consisted of impersonal contacts with an unknown origin, i.e. not acquired by the individual. The contents of the collective unconscious are thought by Jung to be peculiar to humankind in general, not to any one individual's mind. Jung termed the forms and patterns of the collective unconscious "archetypes", alluding to St Augustine's use of the term, as well as to Plato's notion

of Ideas. In the Jungian model of the human psyche, the concept of an archetype is vitally important, being an energy, a consciousness that lies beyond the conscious range of human awareness. He saw the archetypes as being and representing a transcendental quality of timelessness and yet they also descend and enter the conscious mind in dreams and thought images, transforming the recipient's personality in a way that began to incorporate something of the qualities of the archetype. According to Jung, archetypes can also express themselves through common human dramas, rituals and relationships and can be considered mythological, in that archetypal images are found in myths, fairy tales and in religious stories across history and cultures. Whilst the substance of the archetypes is culturally variable, their forms or patterns are universal. He called archetypes "a priori categories of imagination". These archetypes, which appear in various guises in those dreams that find their source in the collective unconscious, include the archetype of the Self, the animus and anima and universal experiences such as birth, death and illness (Whitmont & Perera, 1994). The Self is the ordering and unifying centre of the total psyche, both conscious and unconscious. It is the central archetype. It can provide dreams with symbols and images which intentionally move the dreamer further down the road of self-awareness (Edinger, 1995).

Although none of Jung's theories can account for the phenomena of the differing levels of consciousness experienced by the retreatant on retreat, the latter could possibly be explained as archetypal experiences which have an ordered structure within the human psyche. However these particular archetypes and the way they are ordered has not yet been researched, described or theorised in western psychology. This issue is addressed as one aspect of the Research Question at the end of Chapter Three.

2.1.5 Phenomenological approaches to dream interpretation that relate to dreams on Retreat

Fromm (1951) viewed the dream symbols as a forgotten, yet universal language. He listed three types of symbols in dreams: Conventional symbols were regarded as those with only one meaning, such as a plus or minus sign; accidental symbols were personal to the individual (or a group); and universal symbols, such as water

representing evolving, fire representing power and purification, were common to all peoples and cultures in the world.

Lunt (1990) also looks at dreams from a phenomenological standpoint. He strongly criticises the Freudian perspective for being too theoretical and doctrinaire and thereby imposing interpretations upon the patient's own dreams that often are damaging to the sense of self of the patient. Instead, he extols the personal value of the dream experience as belonging first and foremost to the dreamer. Just as we give meaning to our lives and life experiences, so we give meaning to our dreams. However, he does admit that some dreams are transparent in their message and meaning for us. His main contribution is to urge us to openly explore our dreams with a view to discovering what they might be saying to us.

Lunt and Laing (Lunt, 1990) both saw the therapist as a shaman in working with the client, and in working with a client's dreams. They do not see the shaman the way a sociologist or anthropologist might see them, i.e. by monitoring their behaviour patterns and the ways in which such behaviour proves meaningful in the social matrix. Instead Lunt says *"This is not all that is happening. The shaman is able to enter the consciousness of the community, or in the case of psychotherapy, the patient."* (Lunt, 1990, p.85)

Laing (1982) writes *"among physicians and priests there should be some who are guides, who can educate this person from this world and induct them to the other. To guide them in it; and to lead them back again."* (p.64). This quotation is significant because it speaks of the role of the guide in assisting the patient to move from this world (one kind of conscious existence) into another world, an inner world (a different level of conscious existence and experience). This role is similar to the role of the Retreat Guide who travels with and supports the Retreatant in their journey through the different levels of conscious stages of the Retreat.

Marie-Louise von Franz, one of the foremost Jungian practitioners, echoes a similar theme to Laing:

“As a shaman often suffers from the plight of his people, so Jung was afflicted by dreams of blood baths and catastrophes in Europe (just before the 2nd World War). ... He decided to take the journey to the beyond. ‘Suddenly it was as though the ground literally gave way beneath my feet, and I plunged down into the dark depth.’” (M-L von Franz, 1975, p.99)

“The symbolic inner experiences which the shaman lives through during his period of initiation are identical with the symbolic experiences the man of today lives through during the individuation process.” (M-L von Franz, ibid, p.263)

These writings are clearly relevant in the retreat context where the Retreat Guide, by journeying with the Retreatant in their process, is more clearly able to understand and ‘participate in’ their dreams. This approach is used as one of the research methods in this investigation. It contrasts with the theoretical approaches used in psychotherapy, which simply impose interpretation upon the patient’s dreams, regardless of the context.

2.1.6 Transpersonal approaches to Dream Research

During the past ten years, transpersonal approaches to dream research have also begun to contribute significantly to developmental and personality psychology. For example, Alchemy, which is regarded as a pseudo-science by the scientific community, is attracting the interest of many psychological practitioners and researchers who now begin to see it as a metaphor for understanding the process of human transformation. Among the ancient, medieval, and renaissance alchemists of Europe and the Middle East, it was generally believed that in order for the alchemical opus to be successful, the matter in their vessels must first turn black, then white, then yellow and finally red. Carl Jung, in his opus on Psychology and Alchemy (Jung, 1968) contended that the work of alchemists was a metaphor for the process of individuation, and that the four colours referred to in the process of alchemy (the process of transformation and transmutation of lead into gold), black, white, yellow, and red, termed after the alchemical equivalents, nigredo, albedo, citrinitas, and rubedo, respectively, represented stages of psychological development. In his doctoral dissertation, Ehlers (1993) hypothesised that corroborating evidence for

Jung's theories could be found in the dreams, recorded over a fifteen year period of a single individual in analysis. Statistical (i.e. chi-square) and content analysis of the dream record supported the hypothesis that the nigredo, albedo, and rubedo were distinct, overlapping, sequential stages in this individual's growth. Because of the extremely small number of 'yellow' dreams, there was no support for a citrinitas phase per se, although the content of two dreams suggested that it is a transitional phase between the white and the red phases. Black appears to be connected to the archetype of death, descent into the unconscious, and confrontation with the shadow or core problem. White appears to be connected with the Lunar, receptive non-gender-identified feminine principle and the primacy of psychic reality; and the red, with the solo, active, non-gender-identified masculine principle and the primacy of conscious, physical reality.

In addition, four secondary alchemical colours, green, blue, brown and the multi-coloured 'peacock's tail' were studied. Among the dreams containing the secondary colours as a group, the broad meaning which the colours carried was consistent with alchemical symbolism in about one third to one half of the cases; the remaining dreams were more consistent with current cultural association to these colours. Chi-square analysis of these colours as a group showed that after the end of the nigredo (i.e. black) phase, the dreamer experienced a highly significant increase in colour in dreams.

Indeed the same four colours have been evident in the four phases of the researcher's retreats as well as in the retreat data collected so far. It therefore provides some evidence for the theory of the process, which is discussed below.

Casto (1996) investigated the content and significance of dreams considered spiritual by dreamers using the researcher's definition of 'spiritual' as openness, connectedness, and adherence to something believed to be beyond one's full understanding and that has sacred personal meaning. This work concluded, however, that further research was needed with a large population (30 participants contributed only 50 dreams) to more fully investigate spiritual dreams and their outcomes for contemporary dreamers.

Dahlenburg (1993), in one of the few formal assessments of dream appreciation groups, recorded the effect of group dreamwork on the spiritual well-being, life purpose, and social interest of students at a religiously oriented liberal arts college. This study empirically demonstrated the efficacy of group dreamwork. Biela (1994) looked at the responses to a questionnaire on dreams asking if the respondents had ever had a dream which revealed a solution to a problem. Out of 305 people participating, 34% experienced one of these dreams, and of these, 42% knew the answers immediately and 50% found the answers later, and two were not sure. These results suggest that dreams play an important part in resolving problems. It was noted that all participants had a desire for resolution and searched for answers before their dreams. This study was of interest, as one of the archetypal levels from the present dream research data is described as a level of consciousness where resourcefulness and answers to problems are given. Of course no direct correlation between these two sets of data can be shown, as each study has very different research questions. Nevertheless, this evidence is interesting as well as significant for the use of dreams in therapeutic practice.

Phillips & Pargament (2002) have studied the beneficial effect of the sacred in dreams. This study showed that the more sacred the dream was perceived, the more beneficial the outcome, particularly when the dreamer was suffering from a stressful life event, which related to the dream. These outcomes included less negative affect and more positive affect, psychological and spiritual growth.

Bogzaran (1991) studied the relationship between the dreamer's concepts of the Divine and their encounters with the Divine. Thirty-five subjects who had reported an encounter with the Divine in their lucid dreams were questioned. The results indicated a significant relationship between one's concept of the Divine and one's encounter with the Divine in the dream state. This raises the question for the present study of the impact of personal beliefs and ideas upon the dreams being investigated.

In a study of the North American Plains Indians, Irwin (1990) discusses the division of their visionary world into lower, middle and upper strata inhabited by sacred powers that are contacted through visions. He also discusses the role of spontaneous dreams and the vision quest, paying particular attention to the structure and process of

this quest, which consists of purification, prayer, isolation and deprivation, and finally, 'psychic transformation.' Here the significance lies in combining the retreat process and its associated dreams with the American Indian vision quest. Of particular interest is the three-tiered layer of inner consciousness experienced during the psychic transformation. Another study by Huston (1998) examines three types of dreams: nightmares, lucid dreams, and archetypal dreams. Peculiar characteristics of the subjects' psychological health were noted as well. The results of this study concur with Jung's findings that archetypal dreams were experienced by people with good ego strength, self-actualisation, and positive psychological development while subjects who showed neuroticism in their personality characteristics tended not to experience archetypal or lucid dream recall and instead experienced mainly nightmares. Here the inference points to maturity of the subject as an important factor in the selection of potential retreatants for this particular research project.

Finally a journal article explores the relationship between Gestalt therapy and the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola (1991). Although both processes foster personal development, they are essentially different. Gestalt therapy attends to the person's emotional health, while the spiritual exercises are concerned with the growth of love and in encountering the Divine in all things. It reports, however, that Gestalt dreamwork can contribute to the spiritual transformation sought by the spiritual exercises by increasing the ability of participants to give themselves fully to the retreat experience. This article suggests the cross-fertilising role of dreams on retreat in fostering spiritual transformation.

Significantly, nobody seems to have attempted to develop a transpersonal model that is empirically based. The few transpersonal models in psychotherapy that exist are all based on ideas and experiences drawn from working with clients, Assagioli (1986), Almaas (1998), or they are models that are composites of other theoretical models. Even the most well known of the more recent transpersonal models, those of Wilber (1977; 1979; 1999) and Washburn (1988), have been proposed only on a purely theoretical basis, as neither proponent is a practitioner of psychotherapy or psychology. This thesis will be an attempt therefore to provide the basis for a transpersonal model that uses research data based on dream material.

2.1.7 Contemporary views on dreaming and ‘dreamless’ sleep

The conventional view of dreaming “includes all subjective experiences during sleep, leaving no room for an experience of dreamless sleep.” (Gillespie, 2002). Gillespie reports some writers see dreaming simply as a simulation of waking life. However, as he points out, not all dream experience during sleep is the simulation of waking life, some sleep experiences do not involve simulation. Gillespie cites, for example, the phenomenon of dreamless sleep, quoting from a verse in the Prashna Upanishad (4.6):

“When (the one asleep) is overcome with light, he sees then no dreams. There is this happiness then within the body.”

Gillespie then points out that the word for “light”, *tejas*, can also mean power, glory, brilliance, or heat. However, in all cases the dreamer’s sense of self disappears and is overwhelmed by the experience.

He also refers to the Tibetan Buddhist texts in which the state of dreamless sleep is said to be achievable as a conscious experience whilst going to sleep, before dreams arrive (Norbu, 1992). Within this state one can experience the “Clear Light” appearing like radiant sunlight, which if retained, leads to enlightenment. The vast majority of people however pass through this intermediary state, between waking and dreaming, unconsciously, and are thus unable to remember any experiences of non-dual awareness or white light.

Thus it appears that in the Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the phenomenon of “clear light”, the state of dreamless sleep and in Sufism the state of Absolute Imagination are all terms used to describe a profound transcendental experience which can occur in sleep, and during which the dreamer can be fully conscious of the experience. If the subject was fully conscious during the dreamless state then upon waking from the experience their state of consciousness continues.

Gillespie then looks at the views of Hunt (1989), for instance, who distinguishes between two general types of dreaming, called representational symbolism and presentational symbolism. Representational symbolism includes most dreams. They

are based mainly on personal memories and are very similar in content to our daily life, i.e. these dreams are centred around our daily and long term preoccupations. This makes sense when considering that our main preoccupation is typically with our everyday life. However, there can be exceptions, for example, when someone is undergoing a psychological or psychiatric breakdown, when one would expect a chaotic series of dreams, or when someone is undergoing a significant or profound psychological change or psycho-spiritual change where the series of dreams shows an orderly change in content and context. Undergoing an intense spiritual retreat can also be such an exception. It is in these exceptional circumstances that dreams show what Hunt calls presentational symbolism.

According to Hunt, presentational symbolism occurs in archetypal, lucid and nightmare dreams and typically includes experiences of mandalas, white light and geometric patterns.

Gillespie (2002) also reviews the dream research of La Berge & Rheingold (1990) and Foulkes (1985) who all share the view that dreams simulate waking perception in contrast to dream simulation of waking experiences. Gillespie then goes on to describe dream imagery in which imagery in the dream simulates an (inner) experience in the dream itself. He gives examples:

1. Thinking, remembering and understanding during sleep is not a simulation of waking life, it is thinking about an aspect of it.
2. Emotional responses often accompany dream imagery. Often these continue into the waking state, when all simulation has ended. Hartmann(1998) says such emotions are in fact an important guide as to the determination and meaning of the images in the dream.
3. Darkness is a not a simulation of darkness. Gillespie gives an example of a lucid dream in a brightly lit landscape. Upon closing his eyes consciously, he experienced darkness whilst still being conscious in the dream.

4. Light in dreams is not a simulation of light, i.e. the subjective experience of brightness, e.g. “In a lucid dream, an area of brightness, such as an intense light that appears on the periphery of the visual field, may appear without a simulating form or dream context ... Indeed light may eliminate visual dream imagery altogether.”
5. “Between darkness and light, there may occur a whole range of empty or bleak visual fields, in shades of grey or even brighter colours, devoid of forms or simulating imagery.”
6. The dreamer may have a body experience, e.g. hearing a bell ring, or voices singing or someone speaking.

These views on dreaming and dreamless sleep suggest that dreaming is not simply a simulation of life, but rather that dream imagery simulates the actual experiences in the dream itself. This point is taken up later when the results of the dream research are discussed.

2.2 Summary of relevant research publications from the Journal of the Association for the Study of Dreams, from 1991 to 2004

The Journal of the Association for the Study of Dreams contains an extensive collection of publications on dream research. Several topics which pertain to this study are covered, i.e. how metaphors, which appear in the dreams, provide a structure for the latter (Lakoff, 1993), new evidence to suggest that dreaming is an extension of our consciousness (Mahoud et al, 1998), relating dreams to psychological development (Darling et al, 1993; Hill et al, 1993; Brill, 2000), the therapeutic value of dreams (Hartman, 1991, 1995; Cortright, 1991), the presence of emotion (Nielsen et al, 1991), body symptoms (Wood et al, 1993) and the dreamer’s personality in the dreams (Harman et al, 1991; Schrell et al, 1996; Tonay, 1993) and other related themes. Much of this material provides evidence for the ‘realness’ or ‘reality’ of the dream state. Several interesting features of dream research from this journal are included in appendix XI. A summary of the key points, relevant to this research, follows.

Summing up the Association for the Study of Dreams research papers

1. The overall conclusion is that dreams have a structure of meaning and should not to be dismissed or regarded as random events, or the random firings of neurons in the brain. (Globus, 1991)
2. Dreams seem to have a stress reducing therapeutic function in helping the dreamer to process and work through traumas and stresses of life in the dreams. (Hartman, 1991)
3. Life events, emotion, body symbols and psychopathological systems all appear in the dream life. (Bogart, 1993; Barratt, 1974)
4. The review of the Journal's research articles reveals five types of dreams: existential, anxiety, transcendental, mundane and impactful dreams. These could be reduced to two basic classes: personal/existential and transcendental dreams. Thus the occurrence of the transcendental in dreams is more common than has been previously recognised. (Busink & Kuiken, 1996)
5. In working with dreams, associative methods are helpful. Symbols can be used in identifying patterns and themes in the dreams and in the dreamer's everyday life. Knowing the dreamer is helpful but not vital, and long-term naturalistic observation is far more effective in dream-research, compared to experimentation. (Halliday, 1992; Kramer, 1991; Roussy et al, 2000; Hartman, 2000; Montanegro et al, 1996; Brush, 1993)
6. Dream recall is related to a positive attitude towards dreams, good imagination and what is termed 'thin boundaries' between waking and dreaming consciousness. Later in the chapter, the theory of spiritual retreats is covered in which it is recognised that the longer the retreat, the easier it is to recall dreams. This point seems to be confirmed by the dream research. (Tonay, 1993)

7. Research has led to a junction model being proposed, hypothesising a direct link between waking, sleeping, dreaming and transcendental consciousness. (Travis, 1994)
8. Long term dream studies enable the researcher to develop a classification system of symbols for the dreamer which will greatly assist interpretation. This approach was employed for the long-term study of U.'s dreams, recorded off-retreat whilst she was experiencing a psycho-spiritual transformation (Chapters 6 and 7).
9. Generally, long-term naturalistic studies are the most effective method for dream research. This study has included two long-term naturalistic observations from people 'off-retreat' and one case from the retreatants. (Schmidt, 1999; White, 1999)

However, although the Journal of the Association for the Study of Dreams highlighted many useful pieces of information about dreams, no articles have been published on 'dreams on retreat' or 'dreams and psycho-spiritual transformation'.

The above points were taken into account in the research design, dream data gathering and research methods used.

2.3 A review of literature on Altered States of Consciousness (ASC)

A considerable amount of literature on the levels of consciousness still had to be reviewed. This included literature on altered states of consciousness, experimental research on dream states and lucid dreaming, and religious texts such as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which describe the levels of consciousness in great detail. Similarly there were reviews of the Buddhist 'six-realms' of consciousness, the stages of dying and the after-death state, the seven valleys in Sufism, and St John of the Cross' inner journey in his Dark Night of the Soul to cover.

Texts that relate ASC to dreams

Altered states of consciousness is a phrase coined relatively recently in the psychological field to account for experiences such as hypnosis, mystical states, reverie and meditation states as well as lucid dreaming (Tart, 1972). It does not include pathological states such as being unconscious, comas or epileptic fits. However, the fact that people can experience different states of consciousness, particularly when undergoing a psycho-spiritual transformation, necessitates a review of the literature on altered states of consciousness, in particular those that describe the altered states through the experiences of dreams.

One of the most relevant texts reviewed has been written by the noted Sufi mystic, Ahmed Hilmi, who writes:

“The spiritual journey is essentially the same for every seeker from the point of view of the stages of ego development. Within the Sufi tradition it is recognised that each soul passes through seven stages of development as it is refined in its ability to merge with the Divine. However, from the point of view of manifestation, this process is unique for each traveller; one should not expect the same manifestation as those of someone else. On the way through the paths of evolution, the spiritual journey is evaluated according to the spiritual dreams the traveller sees. Within this tradition it is understood that no matter what or with whom particular dreams may be related, they reflect the state of the seer or dreamer. It is emphasised that those dreams should only be evaluated by a mature guide in order that they may be used as a guidance for the journeyor.”
(Hilmi 1993, Introduction, p.1)

For many years now Hilmi’s text, written whilst teaching philosophy at Istanbul University, has been used by teachers in many branches of Sufism within Turkey as a means of reflecting on the state of an individual's progress in the process of their own spiritual transformation.

In a dissertation on Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World of the Sufi spiritual guide Shaykh, ‘Abd al-Nābulusī, von Schlegell (1997) discusses the role of visions, dreams, and the imagined realm in the personal life of al-Nābulusī. al-Nābulusī was greatly influenced by Ib’n Arabi, who is regarded as the greatest expositor of Sufism, and like the latter, he describes the imagined world as an intermediary realm between the physical and the unseen spiritual worlds. Dreams and visions are seen therefore as direct expressions of our experiences in the intermediary realm, which we can either exceptionally have access to in the waking state (as visions) or more commonly in the dream state as dreams when we sleep. Further, this intermediary realm was seen as having several levels of reality or inner worlds that are perceivable through the imagination (eg dream state). This idea is not exclusive to Sufi Cosmography, but was also envisioned in Greek thought and in other religious cosmographies (Smith, 1976).

Similarly, in Jung’s *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (Edinger, 1995), he discusses the chariot vision of Ezekiel, described in the Old Testament, suggesting it is the basis of the Kabbalistic text of the Jews and of Jewish mysticism, Merkabah, meaning the chariot throne. Interestingly, the imagery of this vision was also taken up in Christian mandalas in the symbols of the four evangelists who become the supporting pillars for the throne of Christ. Jung goes on to use the same fourfold image as the basis for his formulation of the term, Self, described in *Aion* (Jung, 1959). Essentially Jung’s quaternity model of the Self symbolises a movement of psychic energy up and down through four different levels of manifestation, with each level having its own imagery. The four levels can be described in descending order as the spirit level, animal level, vegetable level and mineral level. The quaternity image could be found at any of the four levels. For example if you encountered a quaternity at the spirit level, it would emphasise light and spirit symbolism or heavenly, ethereal, light qualities in the dreams. This is the Anthropos Quaternio. The next level, the animal is the Shadow Quaternio, emphasising shadow symbolism of a darker nature in the dreams. Figures can be human but they have an animal quality to them. On the vegetable level, Paradiso Quaternio, the dreams emphasise plant and garden symbolism. The mineral level, Lapis Quaternio, contains inorganic symbolism, e.g. crystals, which is observable in the dream state. Jung’s Self incorporated all four levels, which gradually developed in a process called individuation. This process entailed four

major stages of development, which will be used as part of the model for the Retreat Process, described below.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead (Evans-Wentz, 1960) in discussing and relating the various dream states humanly possible within the Buddhist cosmography, also refers to the many states of sentient existence - some planetary as in the world, some in the many heavens and paradises and others in the numerous states of purgatory called hells. The latter two refer to our inner personal and impersonal worlds of consciousness, cosmographically described in seven concentric circles of oceans separated by seven enclosing concentric circles of golden mountains. In the centre is the universal hub, the support of all the worlds.

To sum up, the above mentioned texts all speak of the experience of altered states, or levels, of consciousness other than the waking state, through dreams, thus supporting the notion that dreams can be used as a means of monitoring the inner journey of the psycho-spiritual transformation process.

Texts on ASC with little or no reference to dreams

Several traditional religious texts as well as modern transpersonal texts refer to altered states of consciousness without any mention of dreaming.

In Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, an inquiry into the nature of human thinking, corresponding to the stages of thought development, is described. These also correspond to the stages of awakening or stages of samadhi, a most important concept in the yogic tradition (Misra, 1980). Interestingly, a comparison between the stages of consciousness in Sufism and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras has also recently been made (Khan, 1991). In another comparison between these same stages of development in Sufism and the stages of development observed in psychoanalysis, a striking mutual similarity at the pre-personal and personal levels of ego development (Wilber, 1977) was revealed, whilst the transpersonal stages in Sufism seemed to go beyond even the most advanced stages in psychoanalysis (Shafii, 1985).

The noted theoretical physicist, David Bohm, spent many years studying the nature of light and its emergence into our universe. He became renowned for his notion of a universal, implicate, enfolded order of reality, which was constantly unfolding itself, level after level until what we now know of the universe, emerged. In a publication of essays, honouring the works of Bohm, Ullman (1980) illustrates the connection between the personal and universal worlds by analysing the creative way in which images and events from the world are woven together in the dream that has an essential healing nature. Shainberg (1980) also draws attention to the way in which human consciousness erects fixed barriers to the dynamic process of enfolding and unfolding that is characteristic of the implicate order.

St John of the Cross' 'Ascent of Mount Carmel' describes an ascent in consciousness as his inner spiritual search continued (de Nicolas, 1996), although the text does not delineate this journey into levels. However, the orthodox Christian tradition, Chirban (1981) describes five stages of spiritual development in the process of awakening of consciousness.

Brown and Engler (Wilber, Engler and Brown, 1986) show in their cross-cultural study that the traditional accounts of the stages of meditation and the corresponding levels of consciousness accessed, have a cross-cultural validity and are not prone to subjective belief systems or expectation of results. Engler (1984) describes the developmental stages in the representation of self in meditation. Each sense of self attained by the meditator in meditation corresponded to a shift in consciousness during the meditation.

Finally Wilber, in his spectrum of consciousness model, discusses nine 'fulcrums' or stages of human development and reduces them to three basic stages of prepersonal, personal and transpersonal development. These refer to the development of consciousness prior to the fully functioning ego (prepersonal stages), the fulfilment of the ego (personal stage) and the stage of developing beyond the personal range of ego consciousness (Wilber, 1977).

Rowan and the Alchemical Process

Rowan (2005), like Jung (1968), proposes the alchemical process of psycho-spiritual transformation as a model for describing the therapeutic process. He cites the clinical work of Chaplin (1999) and the research conducted by Meier & Boivin (2000) in proposing the alchemical model as being applicable and fundamental to all therapeutic processes. These processes are cyclic in nature, but he notes that alchemy goes further in postulating other possible developments in the therapeutic cycle, beyond what either Chaplin or Meier and Boivin describe in their research findings. Rowan goes on to name and discuss the therapeutic process in terms of eleven phases, linking each phase to a series of levels, or stages, as described by Stiles et al (1992).

However, Rowan's work does not explicitly acknowledge that these first seven phases constitute in themselves a complete therapeutic cycle, i.e. a cycle that works on the personal level of development (Wilber, 1999) (as is typical of most therapeutic processes). Phases seven to eleven effectively constitute a second, psychically deeper and more subtle alchemical cycle, which Rowan does not explicitly recognise, preferring instead to hint that these phases simply involve a much deeper therapeutic exploration. This cycle two, which includes phases seven to eleven, seems to be the subtle level that Rowan (2005) and Wilber refer to. However, neither is the appearance of the subtle level explicitly discussed nor is there any alchemical, spiritual or psychological reference to levels of consciousness within this subtle level. This contrasts with the findings of this research thesis. Finally, Rowan's description of each phase is sometimes confusing, using terms like Albedo and Citrinitas, Separatio and Coniunctio in different ways from their uses in the traditional alchemical literature (de Jong, 2002), and in modern psychological writings such as Edinger (1991) and Jung (1968). Rowan's inclusion of Stiles' levels alongside the alchemical stage of Albedo is also confusing, since the Stiles' levels seem to refer to the personal stage of development, rather than the transpersonal or subtle stage of Albedo.

To sum up, Rowan, like Wilber and Jung, does not see the subtle realm as comprising several subtle levels of consciousness. It is described as a single realm in itself. However, he does clearly stress the importance of recognising Wilber's subtle realm

in a real psycho-spiritual experience and that this is most naturally understood and situated in the transpersonal model.

The results of the current research will be situated and compared alongside Rowan's (2005) contribution in Chapter Nine, the discussion of the results.

Summary of the relevant ASC literature

Whilst the above texts provide further interesting material on the topic of altered states of consciousness, two distinct points emerge. Firstly, some texts on ASC refer to dreams, some do not. Secondly, it appears that whilst there is a common theme of several levels of consciousness being experienced during the process of spiritual transformation, there is a divergence in the description of the number of levels of consciousness as well as a confusion as to what the relationship between the levels of consciousness and the stages of transformation is in going from one text to another.

However, when a distinction is made between the topography of human consciousness and the developmental stages involved in the process of transformation, then a multi-dimensional picture emerges. Basically, spiritual transformation is a time-based developmental process involving several stages, and during this process different levels of consciousness are also being accessed. Unfortunately terms such as 'realms' or 'levels of consciousness' seem to have been used, in some cases, where it would be more appropriate to speak of 'stages of spiritual development.'

As an example, from the description in Hilmi's Sufi text it is not clear that through the various dream states (referred to as stages of development) the levels of consciousness are being described, and that these are being accessed in stages during the process of transformation. However, in comparing Hilmi's text with other Sufi texts (Corbin, 1990; 1994; von Schlegell, 1997), Hilmi's stages of development seem to refer to the time based process of accessing seven levels of consciousness during the spiritual journey as described in the Sufi classic 'Conference of the Birds', by Farid ud-Din Attar (Nott, 1967). Having distinguished between levels and stages, Hilmi's dream levels seem to then agree with the Buddhists' cosmographic version of the universe, which includes the outer level of reality together with the inner personal worlds

(heaven and hell). Here each level of reality or consciousness corresponds to a particular dream state. To achieve this the aspirant has to master the Yoga of the dream state.

Similarly, Wilber's spectrum of consciousness, and Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, although not referring to dream states, instead describe stages of spiritual development. St John of the Cross, although not naming levels of consciousness or dream states, also clearly refers to this phenomenon in his 'Ascent of Mount Carmel', whereas by contrast Chirban is describing the stages of spiritual development in the orthodox Christian tradition.

2.4 Eastern Approaches to Dreams

In Sufism and Tibetan Buddhism we find two spiritual traditions which include the three main areas of this study, dreams, levels of consciousness and spiritual retreats. In both traditions, spiritual retreats are used as the principal method to bring about a psycho-spiritual transformation in the aspirant. During such retreats, dreams are used by the spiritual guide to monitor the spiritual development and progress of the aspirant. Both traditions also explain the role of dreams in guiding aspirants on the spiritual path within the context of a much larger metaphysical model of consciousness. In addition, since their methods of dream interpretation derive from these models, the latter have been summarised. It is also possible that these models could form the basis of the creation of a more general psycho-spiritual model of transformation, based on dream research.

Recent translations of the Tibetan Yoga of the Dream State, Wangyal (1998) and Varela (1997) reveal a radically different view compared to the Western psychological understanding of dreams. There are, however, similarities in terms of interpreting dreams, to the Sufi tradition. Both these traditions address metaphysical experiences in dreams that are not recognised or explained by our western psychological models.

Western psychology research, for example, has focussed on a relatively limited range of consciousness. It recognises the waking conscious or the cognitive state, dream

consciousness, trance and psychosis as four unique, singular states of consciousness. Metaphysical experiences tend to be lumped together with the psychotic state (Liester, 1996). By contrast, in Tibetan Buddhism and Sufism, the dream theories posit the existence of a range of subtler realms of consciousness other than simply dreaming, waking, trance and psychosis. They link or associate each particular subtle level of consciousness with a corresponding psychic energy vortex, or 'Wheel of Light' - called a chakra (Wangyal, 1998), located at various points in the physical body, starting from the base of the spine and ending at the tip of the head, the crown. The chakras cannot be sensed by the five senses in a spiritually unawakened state. These teachings also state that during a period of prolonged spiritual practice, involving meditation and prayers, the aspirant often experiences awareness of these 'chakras'. The process of spiritual transformation is said to involve an "awakening" of each chakra in succession, from the base to the crown. Several retreatants experienced these subtle energies as though they were rising up from the base of the spine to their crown (Hamilton, 1987). However, it is not always necessary for a completely conscious ascent to take place in one retreat process. More often, aspirants experience the awakening of one or two chakras only. Some of these experiences have been reported to clinicians and subsequently interpreted by psychiatrists as psychosis, thereby dismissing the experience and possibly causing psychological harm to the patients themselves (Sannella, 1987). By contrast, awakening to any of these chakras in both Buddhism and Sufism is considered significant in that each successive awakening alters our perception of ourselves and of our world, ultimately leading to a realised, non-dualistic, state of consciousness.

Furthermore, such texts speak of a 'turning within' - as though an inversion of consciousness takes place during the retreat, i.e. the retreatant's attention becomes drawn away from the outside physical world and a greater inner awareness, starting with the inner thoughts and feelings, develops. The experience typically is one of stripping away impressions of the world, exposing their associated memories, emotions, and of going back in time - similar to Freud's regression technique in psychoanalysis to access childhood memories. Indeed, Shafii (1985) has compared the experience of the Sufi aspirant under the tutelage of a guide or Pir, on retreat, with that of the analysand in the psychoanalytic process. Here the stripping away of defences causes us to journey back in time in terms of thoughts, worries and feelings.

The Sufis and Tibetan Buddhists maintain that the daily onslaught of worldly impressions impact and deaden the subtler aspects of our psyche and the chakras - rendering us insensitive to them (Khan, 1982; Wangyal, 1998). However, on retreat, as one is free from these grosser impressions, we become clearer and more sensitive to the inner 'psychic' experiences as the retreat progresses. Secondly, dreams can be associated with any of these 'chakras' - since both traditions have a clearly defined set of criteria for interpreting which chakra is actively influencing our dream experience.

On a spiritual retreat, therefore, the retreatant is given spiritual practices which focus on different chakras at different stages of the retreat, resulting in the release of psychic energy of these subtle centres into the aspirant's consciousness, thereby bringing about a corresponding subtle state of consciousness. This is then reflected in their dreams, i.e. as different chakras awaken, so different subtle states are experienced which are again reflected in their dreams. Presumably, when someone experiences a spontaneous spiritual awakening, outside of the retreat setting, and a particular chakra is awakened, dreams are produced that reflect the associated state of subtle consciousness. The main research effort in this thesis focuses therefore on dreams, on and off retreat, during such a process of 'awakening'.

Thus a number of Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi texts, which represent perhaps the most important contribution by Eastern approaches to working with and understanding dreams in a psycho-spiritual developmental process are reviewed below. These texts provide the only really comprehensive theories of dreams that are applicable to the context of retreat.

2.4.1 Tibetan Buddhism and Yoga of the Dream State

In Tibetan Buddhism, the teachings of the Yoga of the Dream State provide a very different perspective on dreams to our Western understanding of the same. More relevant is that they clearly claim to be able to use dreams as a means of monitoring the spiritual aspirant's progress on the path. A similar claim is made in the Sufi tradition, where the Sufi Pir or Guide is said to ascertain the spiritual state of their mureed or pupil, according to the latter's dream (Shafii, 1985). Several concepts used

in Tibetan Buddhism need explaining before their theory of the dreams and their Yoga of the Dream State can be discussed. This includes dualistic and non-dualistic thinking, samsara (the realm of suffering that we live in), chakras, the six realms of cyclic existence, the three basic modes of the mind (gross, subtle and very subtle and their corresponding dream states of consciousness).

Dreams and Reality

In the Tibetan tradition, dreams are seen to be as real as the waking experience, the former being in the mental realm, and the latter being in the physical realm. However, since Tibetan Yoga practitioners consider most people's 'waking' experience to be dream-like, their aim is to awaken consciously in dreams and in physical life, and to perceive the ultimate underlying consciousness or reality.

Most Western approaches take a psychological view on dreams, i.e. that the dream reveals something about the dreamer's wishes, desires and feelings. The focus is on the content and the meaning of the dreams. By contrast, in Tibetan Dream Yoga and in Sufism, the nature of dreaming consciousness itself is investigated. This approach is said to lead to the experience of the mysterious processes that underlie not only our dreaming life but the whole of our existence (Wangyal, 1998).

How dualistic thinking affects our experience

Dualistic thinking, the separating of subjective observer from the object of perception, is of course the basis of Western science, and yet according to the Buddhist tradition, this results in dualism when it comes to understanding the nature of reality, and consequently two kinds of ignorance arise. Firstly, all of our experience, including dreams, arises from ignorance of the nature of reality. It is the basis of samsara, or ignorance of our true nature and of the true nature of the world. Although this is only one kind of ignorance, it confines our thinking, dreaming and perceptions during our life to the six realms of cyclic existence. However, in awakening beyond dualistic thinking, we are then said to realise the relative value of knowledge as opposed to the knowledge of true reality, the underlying unfettered consciousness beyond all existence.

Tibetan Buddhist Cosmology: The Six Realms of Cyclic Existence

Tibetan Buddhism recognises six inner realms of existence in which we function. Basically, there are six dimensions of consciousness or dimensions of possible existences to which we are simultaneously (but unconsciously) connected. One way they are seen to manifest in us individually is through the six emotions of anger, greed, ignorance, jealousy, pride and pleasurable distraction. The teachings say that the six realms are not only categories of emotional experience but are also actual realms into which beings are born, just as we are born into the human realm and a lion is born into the animal realm. Although the realms appear to be distinct and solid, as our world seems to us, they are actually insubstantial and interpenetrate one another.

We have the seeds of all the six realms within us and when we experience different emotions, we participate in some of the characteristic qualities and suffering predominant in other realms. The six emotions listed are not the only emotions associated with the six realms and neither are they exclusively confined to one realm only. However, they can be considered as keywords representing the entire dimensions of experience from the individual emotion as well as being the key connecting emotion to other experiences and feelings in that realm.

During our dreaming lives too, we experience the six realms. Just as the six negative emotions determine the quality of experience during the day, they shape the feeling and content of dreams. Although the dreams may be of infinite variety, all dreams are connected to one or more of the six dimensions.

The Tibetan Dream Yoga teachings connect each dimension of experience energetically to a particular energy centre, called a chakra, in the body. Chakra literally means “wheel” or “circle”. It was originally a Sanskrit word referring to the subtle and psychic energetic centres in the body. A chakra is a location at which a number of energetic channels meet. The channels are the veins in the system of energetic circulation in the body, through which stream the currents of subtle energy that sustain and vivify life. The channels themselves are energetic and cannot be found in the physical dimension. However, through spiritual practices and through natural sensitivity, individuals can become experientially aware of these channels.

Table 2.1 below shows the correlation between the six realms, their primary emotions and the corresponding chakra.

Table 2.1 The Six Realms¹

REALM	PRIMARY EMOTION	CHAKRA
God (<i>Devas</i>)	Pleasurable distraction	Crown
Demi-god (<i>Asuras</i>)	Envy	Throat
Human	Jealousy	Heart
Animal	Ignorance	Navel
Hungry-ghost (<i>Petras</i>)	Greed	Sexual organs
Hell	Hatred	Soles of the feet

The three root poisons of ignorance, aversion and desire are the three fundamental afflictions that perpetuate the continuity of life in the realms of suffering. They are the basis for explaining the ranges of emotions and behaviour associated with each of the six realms. It is dualistic thought that binds to ignorance, and ignorance of the nature of reality leads to illusion, resulting in grasping (desiring things to be different from what they are) and aversion (avoiding facing things as they are or projecting karmic traces - old memories, thoughts, experiences, feelings onto current situations).

Of course, other emotions such as jealousy, envy and fear could also trigger off anger but when it is triggered, then one participates principally in the ‘hell realm’.

The Hell realm, which corresponds to the base chakra, affects the soles of the feet and hands, making them agitated when we are angry. It ranges from the internal emotional experiences of anger and hatred, to behaviour rooted in anger such as fighting and wars, to repressive institutions, prejudices and biases built on hatred such as armies, racial hatred, and intolerance, to the actual realm in which beings exist.

¹ Wangyal, 1998, p.37

The Hungry Ghost Realm is driven by greed, in which we have the feeling that we keep needing more and it does not satisfy us, it only feeds its own desires. It corresponds with the chakra associated with the sexual organs. The water element is often used as a metaphor to illustrate greed as a perpetual thirst for water. The desire or greed could be for sex, food, power, possessions and attention. It is only by realising that in giving generously we overcome greed, as happened to Scrooge in 'The Christmas Tale' by Dickens.

The Animal Realm suffers through ignorance and is associated with the chakra at the level of the navel. This could manifest, for example, in the feeling of being lost. We know how to go about our daily routine but the significance eludes us. The meaning is gone, not through liberation but through lack of understanding. We have dreams of being in mud, or in a dark place, or on a street with no signs. We arrive in a room that has no exit, or feel confusion about which direction to take. Ignorance is overcome when we experience the true nature of our reality in a state of non-dual awareness. J.B. Priestley had a dream in which this state of ignorance was overcome.

"I dreamt that I was standing at the top of a very high tower, alone, looking down upon myriads of birds all flying in one direction; every kind of bird was there, all the birds of the world. It was a noble sight, this vast aerial river of birds. But now in some mysterious fashion the gear was changed, and time speeded up, so that I saw generations of birds, watching them break their shells, flutter into life, mate, weaken, falter and die. Wings grew only to crumble; bodies were sleek and then, in a flash, bled and shrivelled; and death struck everywhere at every second. What was the use of all this blind struggle towards life, this eager trying of wings, this hurried mating, this flight and surge, all this gigantic meaningless biological effort? As I stared down, seeming to see every creature's ignoble little history almost at a glance, I felt sick at heart. It would be better if not one of them, if not one of us all, had been born, if the struggle ceased forever. I stood on my tower, still alone, desperately unhappy. But now the gear was changed again, and time went faster still, and it was rushing by at such a rate, that the birds could not show any movement, but were like an enormous plain sown with feathers. But along this plain, flickering through the bodies themselves, there now passed a sort of

white flame, trembling, dancing, then hurrying on; and as soon as I saw it I knew that this white flame was life itself, the very quintessence of being; and then it came to me in a rocket-burst of ecstasy, that nothing mattered, nothing could ever matter, because nothing else was real, but this quivering and hurrying lambency of being. Birds, men or creatures not yet shaped and colored, all were of no account except so far as this flame of life travelled through them. It left nothing to mourn over behind it; what I had thought was tragedy was mere emptiness or a shadow show; for now all real feeling was caught and purified and danced on ecstatically with the white flame of life.”
(Edinger, 1991, p.129, 130)

The Human Realm has jealousy at its root. It corresponds to the Heart centre (between the two breast plates). There is the feeling of holding onto things and not wanting to let go. Fear of loss underlies this jealousy. If it is happiness, we are reluctant to share, it is because we perceive it as outside of ourselves and not coming from within the Heart. Openness of Heart is said to overcome the feelings of jealousy. It is our ignorance of the source of happiness that leads to our grasping onto things and fearing loss, hence jealousy.

The Demi-God Realm has pride as its primary emotion, and is associated with the throat centre. Pride in oneself, one's accomplishments, one's domain of influence or territory. The perverse aspect of this is envy - believing we are less than others in some respect. A wounded pride at not having accomplished what others have accomplished or overcome rivals, leads to envy in which one feels diminished. Peacefulness and humility are seen as the positive karmic traces to counter this emotion.

The God Realm is expressed by ‘Pleasurable distraction’ as the emotion (usually by Pride). Here the five negative emotions are equally present and balanced. It is associated with the crown chakra depicted as being at the top of the head. We experience the realm when we are lost in pleasurable distraction, enjoying happy periods of pleasure and happiness. But these periods eventually come to an end.

However, while they last, our awareness is constricted and we remain in a superficial state, and avoid looking too deeply into the situations around us. We avoid being aware of the suffering around us. Whilst enjoyment of pleasure is not discouraged, our perpetual seeking of it as a means of avoiding life's problems is seen as leading to illusion and eventual suffering. Addiction to alcohol, particularly when it is used as an escape would be an example of this emotion. Equally television watching, if used continually to distract ourselves from facing our feelings or our life's problems, is another example.

Tibetan Yoga of the Dream State

Three kinds of dreams

Tibetan Yoga of the dream state recognises three kinds of dreams, which correspond directly to three states of mind, or three levels of reality: gross mind, subtle mind and very subtle mind:

- 1. ordinary samsaric dreams (samsaric referring to dreams about our personal lives, life circumstances)
- 2. dreams of clarity
- 3. clear light dreams.

The first two types are distinguished by the differences of their causes and in either the dreams may be either lucid or non-lucid. In clear light dreams, there is awareness, but no subject-object dichotomy. Clear light dreams occur in non-dual awareness.

This is summarised in the table below:

Table 2.2 The three kinds of dreams²

Gross mind	Ordinary dreams (Arising from personal life experiences)	non-lucid or lucid (rarely)
Subtle mind	Dreams of clarity (Arising from transpersonal levels of awareness)	non-lucid or lucid (rarely)
Very subtle mind	Clear light dreams (non duality)	lucid only (beyond subject/object duality)

The meaning found in ordinary dreams is the meaning that we project into them. This dream is likened to the words of a text book that reflects our daily impressions. Two people can read the same book and read differing meanings into it. However, the text remains unchanged. Becoming lucid in this type of dream enables you to not only be aware that the dream reflects your life impressions, but that you can, with concentration, change the memories.

Dreams of clarity arise as progress is made in dream practice. The dreams become clearer and more detailed, and more is remembered. A greater awareness of the dream state results. Unlike the ordinary or samsaric dream, in which the mind is influenced by the impression of this life, the clear dream is stable and unaffected by the latter. Though images and information arise, these are based less on past impressions and instead present knowledge available directly from consciousness beyond the level of the conventional self. In clear dreams, something is given to or found by the dreamer whereas in samsaric dreams, meaning is projected from the dreamer onto the purity of fundamental experience. It is possible for many people to occasionally present a clear dream. One could imagine this possibility increase on retreat, when there are fewer distractions and one can focus on dreams every night.

Clear light dreams are experienced by very advanced practitioners of Dream Yoga. Strictly speaking it indicates a state of consciousness free from dream, thought and image, but there is also a clear light dream in which the dreamer remains in the nature

² Adopted from Wangyal, 1998, p.42.

of mind. This requires the practitioner to be in a state of non-dual awareness before the clear light dream can arise. The clear light dream is not the same as the dream of clarity, which, while arising from deep and relatively pure aspects of the mind and generated from an inner transpersonal level, still takes place in duality. The clear light dream, while emerging from the karmic traces of the past, does not result in dualistic experience. The practitioner is not an observing subject in relation to the dream as an object, nor as a subject in the world of the dream, but abides wholly integrated in non-dual awareness.

2.5 Sufism and Dreams

In this review, we examine the Sufi's experience of the imagined realm within the context of traditional Sufi Cosmology and dream interpretation. Teachings on dreams from three well-known Sufi spiritual masters, Ib'n Arabi, al-Nābulusī and Hazrat Inayat Khan have been chosen whose teachings cover both dream interpretation and cosmology. Of the three, perhaps Ib'n Arabi's and al-Nābulusī's texts represent the most important and comprehensive précis of Sufi literature on dreams.

Sufism is traditionally seen as the esoteric side of Islam, whereas in fact its principles and teachings pre-date this association, having inherited a tradition which originated in ancient Egypt. This spiritual legacy was subsequently enriched by the Zoroastrian, Christian and Kabbalistic traditions, finally acquiring the name 'Sufism' during the life of Mohammed. The ascetic Sufis happened to wear woollen (*Suf* in Arabic) garments as distinct from other Muslims who wore cotton (Khan, 1979b).

One of the foremost Sufi teachers and mystics of the 13th century was the great Shaykh Ib'n Arabi (1165-1240), famous for his writings on Sufism, mystical revelations and the role of the Imagination on the spiritual path. His writings on 'alam al-Khayal', the realm of the Imagination, are summarised in the Sufi classic, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ib'n Arabi* (Corbin, 1969).

Several hundred years after Ib'n Arabi's death, Shaykh Abd al Nābulusī (1640-1731), who had become a prominent Sufi mystic throughout the Ottoman Empire, wrote of his experiences of the imaginal realm. The main points of Ib'n Arabi's model and the

refinements introduced by al-Nābulusī are included in this review of the Sufi perspective. Later, the writings of Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927) and Sufi cosmology are summarised.

Ib'n Arabi's Map of Reality

Ib'n Arabi's cosmological doctrine signifies two things: a faculty of perception and a sphere of spiritual realities in 'concrete' form, which is the 'place' where the imaginative faculty is used. The variety of manifestation of these realities is limitless, but they are envisioned as objectives and described in a language common to all those who are spiritually adept.

This subtle but discernible and intangible world, operative at all times, but especially perceptible each night in sleep, was al-Nābulusī's primary reference point for his self-knowledge, gained through his own mystical experience.

Ib'n Arabi also spoke of the notion of a state of limbo after death, the interval between an individual's death and the day of resurrection. He called the interval the Barzakh, signifying a whole level of existence and a world separate from the physical reality. It is seen as the bridge between this world and the world of spirit: the unseen world.

In the *Futuhāt al-Makkīyah* (the Meccan Revelations), he sets out three realms of subtle reality (Huston Smith, 1976):

"We say that there are two worlds and two presences, while between the two is another born of elements of them both." (Ib'n Arabi, *Futuhāt*, 3/42)

Creation is underpinned by an eternal source, the State or World of the Absolute from which, in Ib'n Arabi's own view, emanations constantly originate, moving down through many ontological levels to reach the material world of existences. Each level of ontology is named as having both a Divine Presence, *Hadarat*, and a corresponding World or Realm, *Alam*. The first indicates the level of consciousness in and of itself, while the second gives locality to it. The Absolute Essence is said to give birth initially to two categories: the Unseen and the Seen. The Unseen Presence is

accompanied by the World of the Unseen (World of Divine Sovereignty), whilst the Seen refers to the World of Matter with sense-perception and witnessing being the corresponding 'presence'. Roughly speaking, these two categories could be considered respectively as the subtle and gross levels of consciousness or pure spirit and gross matter. Simultaneously, the third category, the intermediate realm, is engendered by the interaction between the higher and lower levels. It is the Presence or World of Imagination. At this level, meanings from above manifest in forms that can be perceived 'from below'.

Ib'n Arabi further pointed out that the intermediate realm was the most all-encompassing of the three categories for 'it conjoins the other two'. He also emphasised that he saw humanity, having the imaginative faculty, as superior to the spirit beings of the World of Imagination (alam al-mithal). Humans, he said, have a link with both the Unseen, through the spirit, and within this world, through the body. The spirit Being, on the other hand, 'can only enter the Phenomenal World by taking on a form as Khayal (human imagination)'. (Ib'n Arabi, *Futuhat*, 3/143). Thus the imaginal realm as a world between the spiritual and material worlds is part of Ib'n Arabi's map of the human microcosm. He makes imagination 'the fundamental constitutive element not only of the mind, but also of the cosmos at large (the macrocosm)'. To understand this statement, we need to appreciate that Ib'n Arabi is referring to the inner world or inner cosmos. In Sufism, the correspondence between the physical and spiritual worlds is such that there is not a single entity in this world which is not a symbol of the other world (Morewedge, 1992). According to Corbin (1986), the Sufis elaborated an 'inter-world' (calling it alam al-mithal) where forms and images dwell, or pass, before becoming manifest. All of creation had to pass through this realm before being given earthly form.

We can therefore chart increasing degrees of density on a map of Ib'n Arabi's levels of reality - descending from pure meaning to the sensory world (just as, in ascending fashion, the body becomes ever more subtle). The prime example of the embodiment of spiritual meanings and beings used by Ib'n Arabi is the annunciation to Mary by Gabriel, who appeared as a 'handsome man' (Holy Koran, 19:17). Gabriel came to the Prophet Mohammed as a Bedouin and in other human forms (Schimmel, 1985).

This is the place of Revelation to the mystic, the place where dreams occur (von Schlegell, 1997).

Ib'n Arabi speaks of his own mystical experience:

"All that can be imagined by the intellect I found there (in a vision) as a possibility that had happened. Quranic verses and hadith that the intellect bars from being manifest on our earth I found outwardly apparent there... Also on that earth (intermediate realm) are all the bodies worn by angels or jinns, or by man in dreams and after death." (Futuhāt, 1/130)

In Sufism, the world of imagination and its images, through representations of non-modified meanings, nevertheless are real and existent in and of themselves, undetermined by human perception. However, Ib'n Arabi recognises two kinds of imagination:

1. Absolute imagination discontinuous with the subject (the visionary) or the object (the visions) and
2. Imagination contiguous with the subject and object.

The first has 'an autonomous and subsisting reality' *sui generis* on the plane of the intermediary world' (Corbin, 1969).

The second is limited to conscious perception, i.e. when the sleeper awakens the imaginative forms disappear, whereas in Absolute imagination, the images remain when the sleeper awakens. He sees then consciously with his open eyes, as a vision.

"Whoever passes through a land is coloured by it. The proof of this is your vision of God in sleep - which is the land of imagination. You see Him only in an embodied form. That is the natural 'law of the land'...God chooses His form for your sleep according to an attribute appropriate to you...When God wants to begin a manifestation, He says to an attribute, 'Be!' and so the form comes into being." (Futuhāt, pp24-5)

Whilst a few spiritually adept people may perceive spiritual beings and visions in the waking state, for most people, however, these encounters, if they are encountered at all, take place in sleep (dreams). “*Both waking and dreaming visions occur in the imaginal realms.*” (*Futuhāt*, p. 24)

The interplay between spirit and matter can occur also in ways that seem purely symbolic. For example, milk is often interpreted as knowledge, and the Islamic Dome symbolises Divinity in Islam. Possibly these symbols are to some extent culturally influenced and yet in many cases the symbols transcend culture, as noted by Jung (1964) in speaking of archetypal symbols. In the latter case, the imaginal realm can be seen to be acting as a link between human and divine meanings, whereas in the former case, symbols are not archetypal and instead have a personal meaning to the dreamer or they may have a cultural influence, due to the culture the dreamer lives in.

Dreams in the Sufi Tradition

From the Sufi perspective, dreams allow us to experience the intermediate world between the Divine, the realm of the spirit, and the earth. Sometimes, there are no boundaries between the two realms. For example, in 1696, al-Nābulusī saw his friend Ahmed al-Safadi in a dream. He was full of joy to see him and they embraced. “Shaykh Ahmed, am I asleep or are you?” he asked. “Neither you nor I are asleep,” al-Safadi answered (von Schlegell, 1997).

This example bears comparison with the Tibetan Buddhist views on lucid dreaming, in which the experience of the dreamer is recognised as being in a consciously awakened state, while the body is apparently asleep.

Following on from Ib’n Arabi’s two categories of imagination, the Sufis divide dreams into two basic categories.

1. Divinely-sent dreams, one of the traces of prophecy, which are called ‘true dreams’ and

2. False dreams which are prompted by human sensory urges (von Grunebaum & Caillois, 1966).

The divinely-sent dreams signify 'visions' seen in sleep as opposed to common dreams of the second type. Messages in true dreams need little or no interpretation - whereas false dreams require skill in interpretation and some knowledge of the dreamer. This view on dreams seems to correspond quite closely to the Tibetan Buddhist view expressed in their Yoga of the Dream State. In both traditions, 'true dreams' or 'lucid dreams' or divinely sent dreams are distinguished from 'false dreams' or 'dreams of illusion' or the type of dreams that require interpretation by a dream interpreter.

For the Sufis, 'true dreams are experienced when the individual's spirit reaches past the intermediate world, the Isthmus, and 'wakes' at the Divine Throne or the world of the Unseen. This view also coincides with the Tibetan Buddhist view of 'clear light dreams' in which consciousness of duality disappears, leaving the 'dreamer' to experience the 'Clear Light'.

A modern Sufi perspective

The twentieth century Sufi mystic Hazrat Inayat Khan (1979a), in a collection of papers that summarised his lectures on the dream state, speaks of the dream as the best way to understand what state of mind a person has. He sees everything that we experience in the physical world as being first found in "the inner planes" and then registered on the mind in the dream state.

Khan defines four different kinds of dreams:

1. A dream in which we see our mind working along the same lines as it did during the day. We recognise the impression of the day's events in our dreams.
2. The symbolical dream is described as the most interesting because it produces before one symbols from which we reveal facts, facts in the past, in the present and in the future. *"And what interests me most, personally, in symbolical*

dreams is that each person has a symbolical dream according to his particular stage of (conscious) evolution."

3. *"And there is also a state of dream in which one sees something out of the past actually happening, or what is going to happen in the future."*
4. *"There is also a state of dream in which one sees a vision. This happens in a meditative condition. A vision may be a warning which is given for the future or an incident of the past may be made known. One can go still further and communicate with the unseen world. It is not like a dream, which goes on like an act on the stage, but it is a picture. That is why it is called a vision, and that is the difference between dream and vision. To those who are developed spiritually the vision often comes, sometimes as an answer to their question, sometimes to warn of an unforeseen change, and sometimes to guide them toward some accomplishment in life." (Khan, 1979a, p.29.)*

Khan refers to visions as an extension of the dream state, wherein the visionary is consciously seeing the vision, whether in a dream (which must therefore be a lucid dream) or when awake. In this case there is a very clear correspondence between the two states. It is no longer what we would normally call a dream, which in Buddhism is regarded as an illusory phenomenon. 'Clear dreams' are beyond illusion.

Clearly the first type of dream refers to a more personal state of mind, whereas by contrast the third type has a more impersonal or transpersonal quality to it, transcending time. It could be compared to the Tibetan Buddhist's 'clear dream', in which there is little sense of the personality of the dreamer present in the dream.

The second type of dream, the symbolic dream, seems to be a mixture of personal symbolism, with the transpersonal capacity to transcend time.

Both dream types one and two seem to correspond to the Tibetan Buddhist notion of a personal or samsaric dream.

The third type of dream seems to fit with the Buddhist notion of a 'relatively clear' dream, as it seems to be more impersonal than personal. It is therefore relatively free of the dreamer's personality traits.

2.6 Dreams, Psychotherapy: A Jungian Perspective

Carl Jung, one of the pioneers of dream work in psychotherapy, was the first Western psychotherapist to recognise the presence of alchemical symbolism in the dreams of his clients. Later he formulated the idea that the process of transformation that his clients were undergoing in their therapy mirrored the alchemical process of transformation, described in the alchemical texts he was studying. Jung spent a considerable amount of time poring over these texts and relating them to the symbols of the dreams of his clients before arriving at the conclusion that psycho-spiritual transformation processes had been described hundreds of years ago. Both the psychological and the spiritual dimensions were combined in them - a considerable departure from Freud's purely psychological theory. However, this thesis takes Jung's ideas further by exploring the spiritual dimensions present within the transformation process, which in turn can illuminate what lies behind the psychological issues that have to be dealt with before the process can proceed.

It was in medieval alchemy that Jung saw the connecting link between Gnosis and the collective unconscious that can be observed in modern man (Jung, 1968). Many of the visions, images and experiences reported by some alchemists seemed to have been interpreted, albeit in non-psychological language, as part of a personal psycho-spiritual transformation process, during which their initial leaden, limited, state (called the initial unconscious state by Jung) was eventually transformed to reveal an infinitely precious sense of the eternal within their souls - called gold. Jung called the latter the process of individuation, or the experience of our true inner Self, our individual soul nature, that has a numinous and mysterious quality about it.

Jung's attitude to psychology is revealed in the following sentence:

“Were it not a fact of (my personal) experience that supreme values reside in the soul, psychology would not interest me in the least, for the soul would then be nothing but a miserable vapour.” (Jung, 1968, p.13)

On the other hand Jung counterbalances the above statement by saying:

“Psychology as the science of the soul has to confine itself to its subject and guard against overstepping its proper boundaries by making metaphysical assertions or other professions of faith.”

“It is not there to ‘set up a God’, it is there to look at the experience (of God) and see if it has human meaning in our lives. We do not say this is a ‘scientific profession of faith’, rather we look at the effect faith has on our experience.”
(Jung, 1968, p.19)

Jung also extends this argument to the realm of dreams:

“So the believer should not boggle at the fact that there are somnia a Deo missa (dreams sent by God) and illuminations of the soul which cannot be traced back to any external causes.” (Jung, 1968, p.10)

Mandalas and the Self

The word mandala comes from Sanskrit, and means circle. Its symbolism includes all concentrically arranged figures, round or square patterns with a centre and radial or spherical arrangements.

This term is a general reference to circular images, which can be drawn, printed, modelled or visioned in dreams, imagination and meditation. Frequently they contain a quaternity or a multiple of four, in the form of a cross, a star, a square, an octagon or in groups of four (objects). These circles or mandala symbols appear when a stage of the development of this ‘conscious and unconscious’ self has been completed. The individuation process involves many stages of development.

In his introduction to the alchemical 'opus', Jung (1969) speaks of an organising centre or Self that participates in this psycho-spiritual transformation of the human psyche. In this way he links the alchemical process to the psychological process.

"The symbols of the process of individuation that appear in dreams are images of an archetypal nature which depict the centralising process or the production of a new centre of personality. I call this centre the 'Self'." (Jung, 1968, p.41)

Jung is referring to a shift in consciousness from the ego, or conscious self, being the centre of the personality, to the centre of a consciousness of self that is prepared to embrace both the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche. This "unconscious" is to include the more subtle and even transcendent ranges of consciousness that our "conscious" self recognises as having a greater wisdom.

He maintained that as this new centre of the 'conscious and unconscious' self is being formed, images that refer to its development, come into consciousness through dreams, imagination and meditation. The process of the formation of this new self is called individuation. These images belong to a definite category which Jung called mandala symbolism.

Alchemy as an Inner Journey

In his *Mysterium Lectures*, Edinger (1995) discusses Jung's classic, *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (Jung, 1963). In particular, paragraph 276-316 of Jung's text, Edinger focuses on the *Perigrinatio* text by the Alchemist, Michael Maier, which discusses five aspects of an alchemist's inner travels in his quest for salvation:

1. *The horizontal journey through the four quarters, which represent an exploration of the four functions of the human psyche, thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. This part must be undertaken first.*
2. *The discovery of the four colours on the journey, black, white, yellow and red, which symbolise the four stages of the alchemical process, nigredo, albedo, citrinitas and rubedo.*

3. *The vertical journey through the seven planetary spheres.*
4. *The Shepherd of Hermes, which comprises a series of visions through which a man named Hermes received religious instructions.*
5. *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes, which is supposed to be a succinct recipe for the Philosopher's Stone, the ultimate quest of the alchemist. A sort of state of 'permanent enlightenment'.*

In the initial stage, nigredo, the neophyte undertakes a horizontal journey through the four functions of the human psyche. The vertical journey through albedo and citrinitas, however, involves an ascent in consciousness through the seven planetary spheres. This was an inner ascent through the psyche in which the acquaintance of the seven different planetary principles, the archetypal factors that go to make up the total personality, was experienced. They are symbolised by the Moon, Sun, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The purpose of the ascent was also to discover one's associated qualities that made up the seeker's nature. This was followed by a descent, rubedo, and the culmination of the alchemical process.

Precisely how albedo, the vertical ascent, proceeds is not explained by Jung nor does he attempt to relate the 'ascent' through the planetary spheres to his clients' dreams. Neither does he speak of the spheres symbolising the different levels of consciousness experienced during the ascent.

Instead, Jung traces the idea of an ascent through the seven spheres of the planets back to Egyptian mythology, in which a soul ascended to return to its source, the Sun God (Jung, 1968). It is this particular aspect of the process that much of this thesis will focus on in the retreat dreams.

In his Alchemical Studies, Jung also quotes the visions of the Great Alchemist Zosimos (3rd Century AD), who experienced a dramatic ascent through the spheres, returning alchemically 'transformed' (Jung, 1983). It is interesting to note that while Jung freely acknowledges the psychic possibilities of such experiences, his

psychological focus remained on the phenomenon of the formation of the Self. Reading Jung's texts, one gets the impression that he found these experiences of interest but, having no psychological means of exploring them, and therefore in having no use nor need for them in his theory of individuation, he fails to consider their possible importance and role in the psycho-spiritual transformation process.

Jung quotes the experience of Edward Maitland as an example of this ascent:

“Once well started on my quest, I found myself traversing a succession of spheres or belts ... the impression produced being that of mounting a vast ladder stretching from the circumference towards the centre of a system, which was at once my own system, the solar system, the universal system, the three systems being at once diverse and identical.” (Jung, 1968, p.26)

Perhaps the archetypal encounter with the ‘heavenly spheres’ the alchemists spoke about could only be described by symbols from the unconscious during a psycho-spiritual transformation process. Curiously enough, Jung does not take this challenge up in reviewing his client's dreams, and when confronted by Zosimos' dreams of ascent, rather than consider the experience and its psychological and spiritual impact on the psyche, he simply quotes them as examples of a spiritual experience, preferring instead to concentrate on the psychological importance of assimilating the spiritual archetypes in the process of individuation of the Self.

The Alchemical Process of Transformation

During the eighteenth century alchemy became incompatible with the spirit of enlightenment and with the emergence of chemistry as a science in its own right. These two forces caused alchemy to disappear into its own obscurity. At least a hundred years earlier, many alchemists had begun to leave aside the chemical aspects of alchemy, which had already given birth to chemistry, and to devote themselves entirely to its more esoteric side, Hermetic philosophy. Thus chemist and Hermetic philosopher parted company. Chemistry became natural science and alchemy became Hermetic philosophy. At the time alchemists were still grappling with the physical attributes of matter, their consciousness explorations were being confronted by the

dark void of the unknown (unconscious), in which figures, images and laws of transformation were dimly perceived and perhaps mistakenly attributed to matter (the chemical substances they were trying to manipulate). In reality, these experiences belonged to the psyche. Everything unknown and empty tends to be filled with psychological projection. It is as if the investigator's own psychic background were mirrored in the darkness. What we see in matter, or think we can see, is probably the contents of our own unconscious which we are projecting into it. In other words, we encounter in matter, as apparently belonging to it, certain qualities and potential meanings of whose psychic nature we are entirely unconscious. This is true of classical alchemy, when empirical science and mystical philosophy were more or less undifferentiated. At the end of the sixteenth century some alchemical writings showed signs of being conscious of the psychic nature of their psycho-spiritual transmutation. Much of the psychological significance of this period of alchemy has been well documented by Herbert Silberer (1917), Evola (1995), Saloman Trismosin (1991), Titus Burkhardt (1986), Holmyard (1990), Arthur Edward Waite (1999), Somers (2004) and de Jong (2002).

Alchemy thus describes the process of transformation of chemical substances (pre sixteenth century alchemy) and of the human psyche (post sixteenth century alchemy).

Some texts describe a six stage process, which is more classical, but more recently it has been described as a four stage process, which happens to be characterised by four colours: black, white, yellow and red. Originally these names were melanosis (blackening), leukosis (whitening), xanthosis (yellowing) and iosis (reddening). This division of the process into four was called the quartering of the philosophy.

The *nigredo* is the initial dark or black state, present from the beginning of the process as a quality of the *prima materia* (our original undifferentiated psychic state). This is said to be brought about by the separation of the four elements, earth, water, fire and air in us. In other words, *nigredo* is the state we enter into when the conscious attitudes of our ego are surrendered to allow the repressed unconscious aspects of our psyche to emerge. Initially, it is experienced as a rather chaotic, undifferentiated state. Opposites or polarities in our nature emerge, like masculine and feminine

images, light and dark images. The opposition between the conscious attitude and the unconscious attitude represents a major polarisation. During *nigredo* a union of opposites in the psyche must be performed (called the *coniunctio*) before the *albedo* stage can begin, e.g. a man may dream of sexual union with a woman. This is said to symbolise the marriage of his unconscious side (the woman) with his conscious attitude (himself in the dream). Now neither can dominate and the opposition (tension) between the two disappears. This is followed by the death of the product of the union (*mortificatio*) and a period of purification which leads to the whitening of the psyche (*albedo*).

In *albedo*, the 'soul' consciousness, or our essential spiritual nature, is released from its attachment to the physical body and physical consciousness and 'resurrects' in its purer, more original condition. At this stage of the process (*albedo*) dreams begin to show white and several colours appear in the dream images. In psychotherapy the albedo stage seems to be experienced once the initial intrapsychic conflicts are resolved. For example, Clarkson (2002) also speaks of *albedo* as the reparative state or period, where the relationships between therapist and client, client and others are greatly improved.

Albedo is also said to be symbolised by the moon or a silver condition. This means the creating of a purely receptive inner psychic state. A more psychological way of describing it would be a very receptive, quiet condition. While *albedo* is regarded as the daybreak, of light, compared to the darkness and confusion of *nigredo*, it is not yet the sunrise, or *rubedo* of the process. In other words, the receptive condition of *albedo* has to be transformed to the extent that the notion of duality is removed, and an 'alchemystical' state of union of soul and spirit, the Royal Marriage, is experienced. This stage is called *citrinitas*. This state has also been described by mystics as a state in which no self exists, and the aspirant experiences transcendental visions of light. Whilst it is rarely documented or even consciously experienced it prepares the alchemist for *rubedo*, in which the soul, spirit and body are once again reunited, bringing the process to its completion. At this point, the aspirant turns around in his or her psyche to return to the body and the physical world, bringing a sense of inner union with them.

Thus Jung's findings that dreams provided the link between alchemy and psychotherapy, i.e. that the dreams provided a means of tracking the psychotherapeutic process can be taken further into the setting of a spiritual retreat in which the psycho-spiritual transformation process is similarly monitored by the retreat guide. That is, the retreat dream data could then be examined to see if indeed the dreams do reflect the transformation process and if they can also mirror the different levels of consciousness that the retreatant might encounter.

2.7 The theory and nature of spiritual retreats

Introduction

Carl Jung used the knowledge of alchemy in his understanding of the human transformation process. However, his writings do not include any mention of the different inner states of consciousness that his clients might have experienced during their process. Instead, he chose to focus on a particular aspect of their process, i.e. the emergence of the Self into the consciousness of the client. He called this process individuation.

Transformation, however, can be looked at in a more intensive and complete way by accompanying a retreatant on a spiritual retreat as a retreat guide. Whilst the emphasis of the guiding will be on the inner process, particularly on the changing inner states of consciousness that the retreatant is accessing (compared to the more psychological focus in the psychotherapeutic setting), nevertheless the process will be much the same as in the therapeutic setting with the role of the guide being similar to that of the therapist. There are however significant differences between the two settings. For instance, it is possible on a retreat to not only intensify the transformation process (as compared to the therapeutic setting) but also to exclude the daily intrusion of the world into the retreatant's life, which is not possible in psychotherapy. Most importantly the dreams can be monitored day and night - a harder task to accomplish with a psychotherapy client. In addition, it seems the boundaries between waking and dreaming become 'thinner' on retreat and so the dreams are more easily remembered. Fourthly, the presence of the world and the

retreatant's worldly life begins to fade away leaving their inner psychic processes much more transparent than they would be in a psychotherapeutic setting.

Finally, since the psycho-spiritual transformation process is being studied through the medium of dreams, it is important therefore to ensure that a setting such as retreat, which is relatively free of any world intrusion, be used. For these reasons, a silent, individual retreat seemed to be an appropriate setting for this study of the role of dreams in human transformation. In the past it has not been a practice to record the dreams of retreatants, and certainly no studies on this subject have been published.

A brief history of spiritual retreats in the Sufic tradition

Whilst retreat in all spiritual traditions has a common focus, to be close to our creator, to understand the spiritual life and its path and to be closer to our own inner life, the emphasis of the retreat and the spiritual practices given vary from tradition to tradition.

In the West we often think of Yogis or the desert fathers of Judaism, of Christianity and of Islam when the subject of retreat is mentioned. However, retreat is an ancient tradition going back thousands of years. It is as old as religion, a quest for a Divine Source itself. Although we cannot be certain historically when retreats began, we do know of retreats in the Vedic tradition going back thousands of years and of the spiritual seekers wandering in the desert, as described by the Old Testament of the Bible.

In the Sufi tradition, retreats in fact pre-dated the founding of Islam, although the name Sufi emerged around the time of Islam as being the 'woolly ones', *suf* meaning wool, since the hermits on spiritual retreat tended to wear wool at the time. Retreat would be prescribed for the aspirant when they were deemed ready or 'psychologically and spiritually' mature enough to undertake such a task. The purpose of the retreat was the awakening of the pupil to the experience of the 'inner psychic life', which was said to be the origin of their thoughts, impulses, desires, feelings and actions. To encounter their inner life meant the retreatant had an opportunity to examine it according to their own natural conscience and to work with spiritual

practices to help purify the psyche of the impressions of the outer world and to transform their inner world until it reflected the Divine Presence. This, it was said, would be discovered by the aspirant at a certain point during their journey. This approach allowed a freedom and choice for the retreatant, who could stop at any point and leave the retreat, or they could choose to journey further if they so chose (Shafii, 1985). Secondly, this philosophy, which implied that the guide was not necessarily the intermediary between the aspirant and 'his Lord', was similar to the Gnostic Christian tradition of the early Christian church. The imagination could be the bridge between their outer life and the realm of spirit. Indeed, it was believed possible to experience union with the Divine under the guidance of a Sufi Pir (or guide). However, the guide had to have considerable personal experience of the spiritual path and they would also have had to have a considerable degree of psychological insight into the aspirant's psyche. In some Sufi orders dreams were used as a guide by the Pir to monitor the retreatant's progress, whilst in others dreams were not employed and the intuitions of the guide was relied upon. To some extent, this is similar to the role of the analyst or psychotherapist in accompanying the client on an extended and courageous inner journey in the therapeutic setting. In fact, in the past forty years, a less demanding and updated version of the traditional Sufi retreat has been developed to allow interested aspirants to explore their own spirituality without having to undertake a spiritual training or discipleship (Retreat Manual, 1985). The theory and nature of the retreat process is described below.

The Retreat

On a silent, individual retreat, the focus of awareness is much more internal than when participating in the world outside. Thoughts, feelings, body sensations and dreams become more prominent in awareness. The retreat thus becomes a suitable environment in which to see whether such archetypes emerge more clearly in conscious awareness and in dreams, as there is little outside influence, contaminating the inner awareness. Indeed, the retreat setting seemed to be more suited to looking at these archetypal levels of consciousness mentioned above in an environment that is less distracting when compared to the everyday life.

The retreat environment, the theory of the retreat process, and the nature of the spiritual retreat experience has been described in detail in two papers presented to the British Association for Counselling Research Conference (Hamilton, 1999; 2000). These papers discussed the preliminary results of an investigation into the role of dreams in the study of human transformation on a spiritual retreat. In effect, the paper concluded that the transformation process was independent of the retreat setting, culture and gender. The stages of the retreat process, and the levels of consciousness experienced by the retreatants are summarised in tabular form below. Table 2.3 describes the four stages through which the retreatant passes in retreat. Each stage has its own characteristics as well as indications of its beginning and ending.

Although these stages of retreat have been recognised by Sufi retreat guides working with retreats over the years (Retreat Manual, 1985), the names given to the stages and the descriptions of the personal issues encountered in each stage in Table 2.3 correspond to a more psychological way of describing them. In reviewing this model, it corresponds very closely to the four stage alchemical model of transformation described by Jung (1968), i.e. turning within corresponds to Nigredo, the subtle self corresponds to Albedo, the transcendent state corresponds to Citrinitas and ‘Awake in Life’ corresponds to Rubedo. Thus the alchemical model of the stages of transformation can be seen as the same as the four stage retreat model.

Table 2.3 - The four stages of retreat

<u>Stage One:</u> Turning Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Descent into the unconscious and a confrontation with the Shadow. Encounters the instinctual, desire nature.◆ Struggles with the mind. Tension between the inner world and the pull of the environment.◆ Experienced as a ‘stage of darkness’.
<u>Stage Two:</u> The Subtle Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Less aware of body, the conscious mind becomes very quiet. Retreatant moves into a more receptive stage - they become more involved in their inner experiences.◆ Struggles are to do with life issues. Becomes more aware of particular qualities emerging into consciousness associated with personal struggles.◆ Sense of self becomes more and more subtle.

Table 2.3 - The four stages of retreat continued

<u>Stage Three:</u> The Transcendental State	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Little awareness of body and virtually no conscious thought. Detached, timeless, impersonal state. Has feeling of being ‘out of life’, beyond existence.◆ Initially experienced as ‘empty’, ‘nothingness’. Initial ‘dark night’ of this experience gives way to visions, impersonal imagery.
<u>Stage Four:</u> Awake in Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Consciousness of body and personal thoughts returns.◆ Sense of self becomes more substantial again, yet incorporating an awareness of the ‘subtle inner self’.

In fact, Table 2.3 was created after it was recognised that the four stages of retreat corresponded to the four alchemical stages. It was written using psychological terms to describe the retreatants’ dreams and their personal experiences as the transformation process unfolded.

Table 2.4 describes the levels of consciousness accessed while proceeding through the four stages on retreat. In the beginning of the process the Instinctual self is encountered. This is experienced as a dark chaotic stage (*nigredo*) during which the retreatant is turning away from the known world and their habitual conscious mind whilst at the same time experiencing the emergence of the repressed untamed instinctual urges (Freud, 1923). Initially, when the retreatant turns away from the conscious mind, they experience a gap or void behind their conscious and unconscious thoughts. This ‘gap’ is experienced as dark, unknown and frightening. It is called the ‘Bazarkh’ in Sufism (Corbin, 1969) or ‘Bardo’ in Buddhism (Sogyal Rinpoche, 1992). The ‘ascent’ begins in stage two, whilst the descent occurs during stage four (*rubedo*), after which the retreatant is ready to end their retreat and re-emerge back into their everyday life. This same model of process and levels of consciousness can be extended to examine dreams recorded by clients who experience transformation whilst in the therapeutic process and by people who also spontaneously experience a psychological or spiritual transformation without being in therapy or on retreat. A partial analysis of nearly 1000 dreams that had been recorded during twenty spiritual retreats was initially presented as part of the Transfer Document M.Phil./PhD. (Hamilton, 2001a).

To sum up, this model may be used as a general model that can be applied to describe and explain the phenomenon of psychological and spiritual transformation, whatever the context that this process takes place in.

Table 2.4 - The Levels of Consciousness

<p><u>Level One:</u> The Instinctual mind/ Self</p>	<p>Dreams are quite chaotic, showing the instinctual nature. Themes are a mix of fears, oppression, sexual conflicts, temptations and earthiness (animals and reptilian creatures such as spiders, snakes, rats appear in dreams). Whilst the retreatant is often conscious of these themes, through mental images, thoughts and feelings in the waking state, they also experience drowsiness and poor concentration as though they are in a trance-like state. Stage 1 of the process.</p>
<p><u>Level Two:</u> The Creative mind/self</p>	<p>The mind becomes clearer and creative. The retreatant feels more awake and alive. Dreams show the artistic and creative side, humour, creativity and a greater clarity. Instinctual nature disappears from the dream content. The mind-world, i.e. the way they think about people, their personal issues, likes and dislikes, is shown in the dreams. This is experienced at the beginning of Stage 2.</p>
<p><u>Level Three:</u> The Loving self</p>	<p>Retreatant becomes innocent. Influence of the mind lessens. Dreams show qualities/themes of beauty and harmony in people and natural landscapes. A more joyful, loving heart-like nature emerges in the personality. Retreatants feel less connected to the body and more subtle. This is experienced in Stage 2.</p>
<p><u>Level Four:</u> The Wise self</p>	<p>Initially encountered themes are negative, i.e. distortions of the personality are shown in dreams (crookedness of their nature, fear of power, wilfulness, anger, rage). If these issues are acknowledged and resolved in their personal lives following the retreat then in subsequent retreats the dreams show themes like justice, wisdom, compassion, truthfulness. The retreatant initially experiences a real struggle of dark versus light, between the distortions in their personality and their deeper inner (soul) nature. Resolution of this struggle is often shown by dreams of celebration, carnival, festivals, etc. Now the retreatant starts to feel more peaceful and quiet in Stage 2 and the sense of self begins to identify with the deeper inner soul nature.</p>

Table 2.4 - The Levels of Consciousness continued

<u>Level Five:</u> The Sacred self	Issues of self-image come up. Feelings of being unworthy of the spiritual quest. Dreams show innocent children in them, along with religious symbols like the cross, churches, altars, etc. Later qualities of peacefulness, sacredness, splendour (of a landscape) emerge. The retreatant begins to feel ecstatic and yet is contained inwardly. Now the sense of self is largely free of instinctual aspects, as well as the usual cognitive thought processes that centre around everyday life. The self identifies more fully with the angelic or deeper inner soul nature. This is experienced in Stage 2 .
<u>Level Six:</u> The Pure self	Retreatant becomes very detached, impersonal, completely disinterested in the body, the outside world. Feels very pure, inside. Dreams initially show landscapes of snow, white doves, etc. Stage 2 now culminates with dreams of weddings or marriage. The self becomes free of all worldly, instinctual aspects and identifies completely with its deeper inner soul nature.

The alchemical model in Table 2.3 and the model of the levels of subtle self in Table 2.4 are both employed in the analysis of the retreat dream data in this study. Table 2.4 began with the theory of retreats that recognises the existence of the six levels of consciousness that the retreatant can possibly access on retreat. These levels of consciousness have been well documented by several Sufi writers (Corbin, 1969; Khan, 1979; von Schlegell, 1997). However, Table 2.4, as with Table 2.3, originated out of the author's dream research that preceded and continued into this study. Indeed, the use of these two models, which were both developed out of the original theory of retreats (Retreat Manual, 1985), represents a blend of Western alchemy and the traditional Eastern approaches to the understanding of the self. As such, the two models are orthogonal and are crucial to the development of this study, i.e. whilst the retreatant experiences different phases of the retreat (alchemical process model) so they also experience an ascent and descent in consciousness (the transcendental model of the levels of self being accessed during the retreat).

2.8 Summary of Literature Search on Dreams, Levels of Consciousness, Transformation and Retreats

The literature search has covered several areas: psychological theories of dreams, transpersonal approaches to dream research, altered states of consciousness and literature from a variety of spiritual disciplines that discuss the various possible levels of human consciousness, a summary of modern dream research, and the theory and the nature of spiritual retreats. From this it appears that both the humanistic and transpersonal fields of psychology remain considerably under-researched when it comes to dreams and transformation. Clearly research linking dreams to the levels of consciousness is still at an early stage. There is very little evidence of any literature that discusses the role of dreams in monitoring the stages of personal or spiritual transformation whilst linking it with the movement through the awareness and the experience of several levels of consciousness.

The main Western dream theories, with the exception of Jung's theory of the individuation process, seem to ignore transformation as a process that progresses in stages. All ignore or are unaware of the planes of consciousness or levels of self being accessed during such a process. Transpersonal dream research has however, along with Jung's writings, highlighted several interesting aspects of the spiritual perspective - including the experience of the Divine in dreams. A new professional publication, the Journal for the Association for the Study of Dreams, has also published several articles validating the significance and role of dreams in therapy and the transformation process. Several of the topics in these articles will be referred to in this thesis.

One particular study (Bogzaran, 1989) illustrated the impact of personal beliefs and ideas upon people's dreams. Thus when considering the role of dreams in monitoring an experience of spiritual transformation, it becomes important to include data from subjects who were not on retreat (and were not subject to such a potentially influential context). Similarly to take this into account when including data from people on a spiritual retreat, where such a specialised context may influence the retreatant. More importantly, data from subjects who knew nothing of the so-called 'levels of

consciousness' would have to be compared with dream data gathered from subjects who did have some knowledge, beliefs or ideas about the 'levels of consciousness.'

However, it is in the simplicity of the Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi dream theories that the clearest and most useful ideas have emerged and which seem to explain some of the early dream experiences recorded in this research. These theories offer useful tools and insights into the analysis of the dream data.

The alchemical model, although somewhat complex, explains the process of transformation that is clearly applicable to psychotherapy, as Jung has shown. And yet Jung does not discuss its use in allowing for the possibility of experiencing other levels of consciousness or levels of self during the process. It would seem, therefore, that through the use of dreams as a medium for monitoring stages of the transformation process as well as the levels of consciousness being experienced, that an understanding of the process from a psychological and spiritual standpoint is possible. In this way the Eastern theories of dreams and the levels of consciousness can be combined to complement the Western idea of the process of human transformation. This would enable our Western view of human experience and in particular the human transformation process to include the spiritual dimension or the inner subtle dimensions of consciousness in our understanding of the psycho-spiritual transformation experience. These ideas are explored in the chapters that follow.

To sum up, it would seem therefore, that despite a hundred years of psychological dream theories and despite recent research into the nature of consciousness, the fields of transpersonal psychology and transpersonal psychotherapy, whilst appreciating the esoteric wisdom of spiritual tasks, have not been able to fully combine this knowledge and apply it to the process of human transformation. Models such as Wilber's Spectrum, Jung's individuation process and Assagioli's Egg model (Assagioli, 1971) remain somewhat disconnected from each other as they do not explain how or when these levels of consciousness are accessed during the transformation process.

Possibly a dynamic model, incorporating both the stages of the process of transformation and the levels of consciousness accessed, could better explain these human experiences of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. An empirical approach may well provide a significant step in the development of such a model.

Chapter 3

Transpersonal Research Methods

3.0 Introduction

Before describing the research methodology proposed, it is necessary to discuss the methodological issues involved in the study, some of which emerged early on in the research. Reasons are also set out below which favour the choice of qualitative methods that are transpersonal and phenomenological in their orientation. Basically, these methods must be sensitive to the context in which the research is carried out, and must make allowance for, and recognise, the value of the personal involvement of the researcher with his/her subject matter.

Braud & Anderson (1998) describe a number of transpersonal methods that are now being used in social science research. These methods allow for subjective involvement and are sensitive to the subject being researched. They do, however, make a number of important assumptions, namely, they accept the idea of a transcendental essence that is present in nature, as well as the inherent existence of instincts in human nature. Both the inherent essence and the human instincts are seen as being independent of the world, albeit that they are expressed by people through the social world.

This transpersonal view is at variance with other qualitative social science research methods that depend upon a social constructivist paradigm. The latter does not assume an inherent essence or instinct in the human being. Instead, behaviours and experiences are seen in the light of discursive and cultural practice for the social constructivists. However, in the present study, essence and instinct are extremely important and to deconstruct these terms would be tantamount to abandoning the very paradigm upon which this study is based. The fact that most people who have described spontaneous experiences of 'essence' (herein called a transpersonal experience) have had these experiences independent of the social world, e.g. alone in

nature, in isolation, without prior knowledge or preparation, only lends weight to the transpersonal argument (Bucke, 1923; Almaas, 1998).

It is also of interest to note that Valle (1998a), in his discussion and analysis of the existential-phenomenological perspectives that informs phenomenological inquiry, suggests that transcendent/transpersonal awareness is “prior to any pre-reflective structure of a particular experience”. This transpersonal awareness is not of the phenomenal realm of perceiver and perceived but rather of a noumenal, unitive space from which both intentional consciousness and phenomenal experience manifest in life. This point of view suggests that transpersonal awareness and therefore transpersonal experiences cannot be reduced simply to a social context. Thus Valle argues that empirical phenomenological research methods must be employed in the study of transpersonal and transcendental experiences. If this transpersonal awareness is *a priori*, then an appropriate method and vehicle for its experience and expression must be employed.

“It seems that the transpersonal/transcendent aspects of any given experience manifest in, come through, or make themselves known via an identifiable form or vehicle. This theme was evident in several research studies, the specific terms being silence, being with the dying, being with the suffering, near-death experience, being with one’s spiritual teacher and synchronicity. Transpersonal experiences can come through many forms including meditation, rituals, dreams, sexual experience, initiation, music and the experience of beauty.” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p.106.)

Maslow’s (1968) description and discussion of peak experiences are relevant here. It would therefore seem that if there are other levels of consciousness that are ‘a priori’ and independent of human existence and experience, then dreams could be a vehicle for the experience and expression of such levels, or vice versa, and that the study of dreams could lead to the identification of a transpersonal experience of such levels. Furthermore, it is evident that dreams could be used as a transpersonal research tool in researching this transpersonal subject area, thereby effectively making use of empirical phenomenological research methods.

Indeed, in looking at the preliminary results it appeared that the more acceptable social research methods could not offer a convincing explanation of the dream data. Now although it appeared that the stages of the retreat and the different levels of consciousness were present throughout the dreams recorded on retreat, this could be explained from a social constructivist point of view as a learned process rather than being evidence of some kind of 'inner structured self' emerging from the unconscious. However, in Hamilton (2000b), it was shown that in some cases both the waking and dream experiences of inexperienced retreatants on retreat showed a remarkably clear picture of levels and stages, compared with the results of some of the experienced retreatants, i.e. some inexperienced retreatants accessed more subtle levels of consciousness (or levels of self) than those of their more experienced counterparts who already had completed several previous retreats. Secondly, the clarity, profundity and depths that these newcomers experienced of the different subtle levels far exceeded the depths and clarity that the same experienced retreatants reported. This suggested that a different explanation of this phenomenon was needed, i.e. that the experiences of the subtle levels of consciousness did not seem to be a learned phenomenon. Rather the retreatants seemed to be accessing some archetypal levels of consciousness that were independent of any learning or socialisation process.

In one case, for example, P.W. (ii, iii, v, vi), the retreatant began participating in the retreat/dreams study after his first retreat (P.W. (i)). As he had recorded his dreams, this first retreat was then incorporated into the dream data for this study. If anything, it could be argued when looking at his subsequent retreats (P.W. (ii), (iii)), in which the levels of consciousness he experienced were not quite as clear as the levels he experienced in his first retreat, that this knowledge may have inhibited him, rather than encouraged a 'dutiful production' of the 'right sort of dreams'. In fact, a more important factor turned out to be the changing of his retreat guides during his retreats, which required some adjustment on his part. In spite of this, his retreats eventually began to show a clearer and clearer presence of the different levels of consciousness (P.W. (v), (vi)).

To sum up, it seemed that such a transpersonal research topic could be best understood in the light of the transpersonal paradigm, and that transpersonal research methods were better suited to the investigation of dreams on retreat.

3.1 Defining transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy

As no one definition has been established, several viewpoints or definitions, that cover the main points of the transpersonal perspective, are offered below:

“As a field of research, scholarship and application, transpersonal psychology endeavours to understand and value human life in its fullest and most transformative expression. Commonly regarded as the fourth expression of 20th Century psychology, transpersonal psychology seeks to delve deeply into the most profound and inexplicable aspects of human experience, including mystical experiences, experiences of transformation, extraordinary insight, meditative awareness, altered states of consciousness, and self-actualisation. Even in studying commonplace phenomena, transpersonal psychologists tend to explore the dimensions of human nature and experience that ordinarily are thought of as spiritual and ineffable and concerned with ultimate value. Having expanded steadily in the past 25 years or so, this innovative expression of psychology builds on and extends the hallmark eras of behavioural, psychoanalytic and humanistic psychologies.” (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p.69)

Transpersonal psychology is often seen as an off-shoot of humanistic psychology, but it should be seen as a unique psychology in its own right. West (2000), for example, sees transpersonal psychology as a separate discipline rather than being an extension of the humanistic perspective. He quotes from Hendricks & Weinhold:

“‘Transpersonal approaches draw upon the first three forces while going beyond to see humans as intuitive, mystical, psychic, and spiritual. Above all, humans are viewed as unifiable, having the potential for harmonious and holistic development of all their potential’ (Hendricks and Weinhold, 1982:8).”

The transpersonal perspective is described by Sperry (2001) as incorporating the spiritual dimension, both from the Eastern and Western spiritual perspectives:

“Transpersonal psychology is a broad term for the approaches to therapy which focus on the spiritual dimension (i.e., consciousness, mystical experiences, altered states of consciousness, and on questions relating to the value of life and the meaning of existence). Transpersonal psychology is considered by many to be the ‘fourth force’ in psychology, following psychoanalysis, behavior therapy, and humanistic psychology. Its precursors are to be found in Eastern religions and in the West. Both Augustine and Thomas Aquinas can be considered as early thinkers who combined a psychological awareness with a spiritual and philosophical focus. More recently, William James anticipated the claims of current transpersonal psychology that altered states of consciousness can be induced and can give access to special knowledge which cannot be gained through ordinary conscious processes.” (Sperry, 2001, p.35)

Boorstein’s definition (1997) includes transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy and is not bounded by any spiritual or religion system.

“Transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy address the broadest conceptualization possible of human psychological growth. This includes, along with comfort and gratification in ones relationship with self, family, work, and society, a recognition of the yearning for meaning, purpose, and transcendence of self-consciousness that are a part of our nature. Transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy presuppose the existence of a spiritual dimension in human beings, and being a transpersonal therapist presupposes sharing this conviction. The field is not limited to any particular spiritual or religious system - it recognizes the validity of spiritual systems in general and the yearning for spiritual unfolding as one of the givens of human growth and development.” (Boorstein, 1997, p.2)

Cortright (1997) describes transpersonal psychology as the scientific study of higher states of consciousness. Deslauriers (2003) in his definition describes a variety of methods including contemplative practices, psychotherapy, dreamwork, creativity and other means of spiritual inquiry that are used to explore this field.

“Transpersonal Psychology emphasises the fact that psychological and spiritual development should ideally unfold in tandem, in continuous cycles of self-transcendence and personal integration. In this way, Transpersonal Psychology seeks to understand how particular skills and aptitudes can be acquired and displayed in conjunction with psycho-spiritual development.”
(Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 2003, Vol.35, No.2, p.146.)

From an epistemological point of view, transpersonal psychology attempts to articulate its knowledge claims by using the “third person” approach (scientific testing and observation) which is complemented by “first person” (experiential and phenomenological observation) and “second person” (I-thou relational) inquiry. With this “second person” approach, transpersonal psychology attempts to recognise the relational nature of consciousness, including the social or communal extension of psychological and spiritual wellness.

Transpersonal Psychology and Human Potential

Lajoie & Shapiro (1992) have also defined transpersonal psychology as “concerned with the study of humanity’s highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding, and realisation of unitive, spiritual and transcendent states of consciousness.”

The term ‘human potential’ is a modern one, being defined by Maslow (1968) as one of the fundamental tenets of transpersonal psychology. It is assumed as being something that is inherently within us. Whilst ideas about self expression and self transformation emerged with the development of the modern notion of self in the twentieth century, self transformation is not a new concept. Much of the literature on alchemy concerns the notion of self transformation (Jung, 1968, 1983). Furthermore, traditions such as Tibetan Buddhism (Evans-Wentz, 1960) and Sufism (Shafii, 1985) have a long history of dealing specifically with this topic. In Sufism it is called *fana* and *baqa*, the annihilation of the false (superficial) self and the resurrection of the real (deeper, inner) Self. Shafii (1985) specifically makes the comparison between the process of transformation of the self that takes place in psychoanalysis with the psycho-spiritual transformation process that takes place when a spiritual aspirant

submits themselves to the guidance and training of a Sufi guide. What is important to note is that this spiritual potential, or 'highest human potential' that Lajoie & Shapiro speak of, is realised by the Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi aspirants upon completion of their spiritual training. Transpersonal psychology therefore began as the first modern western psychological discipline to incorporate the ideas long held in Eastern psychology and Eastern spirituality. Hence the term 'highest human potential' stands in as a modern renaming of an old Eastern concept.

The Transpersonal goes beyond the normal range of human experience

It should be noted that the words transpersonal, transcendent and spiritual represent distinctions among themselves. For example, transpersonal currently refers to any experience that is trans-egoic, beyond the normal range of human perception or experience.

In this study, being able to perceive what most other people perceive with their five senses is regarded as being within the normal range of human perception, e.g. seeing pertains to seeing objects and being able to agree with others what it is that we see, assuming the objects we are seeing are close enough to view even if we are short-sighted, long-sighted or partially-sighted.

However, some people have visual experiences in which they see things that most others cannot see, e.g. psychic phenomena, seeing colours and coloured lights around people that are not simply a reflection of the surrounding light or a radiant emission of light from their bodies. Similarly, an artist may see something in a landscape which most other people would not see. Both these examples constitute 'going beyond the normal range of human perception'. The artist is using their imagination (in a way that most people cannot) to translate into imagery something of what they feel or perceive in the landscape. The psychic is using a subtle visual (a psychic) sense to see what most people cannot see.

Unfortunately, the positivistic outlook of today rules out or questions spiritual and psychic experiences that do not fall within the range of our 'normal perception'.

William West (2000) reports of many clients not having the images, or language, any

more, to describe what he calls 'spiritual experience' - not necessarily in the religious context. In other words, our modern life has exorcised all our connection with inner experiences that relate to spirituality. This impoverishes us and hinders us in a search for our own meaningful experiences. If we do not have a language to describe an inner experience it remains unfathomable and becomes lost to the unconscious side of our psyche.

Hence the term transpersonal experience refers to those perceptions and experiences that some people have (and most others don't) which go beyond our normal experience.

Archetypal realities and the Transpersonal

The transpersonal includes the archetypal realities of Jung's collective unconscious and it can include a radical transcendent awareness. Although notions such as the collective unconscious refer to states of mind that are deeper than or beyond our normal ego consciousness, transcendent refers to a completely sovereign spiritual awareness without the slightest inclination to define itself as anything outside itself including contents of the mind, either conscious or unconscious, personal or collective, i.e. awareness that is not only trans-egoic but trans-mind. This distinction between transpersonal and transcendent awareness may eventually lead to the emergence of a fifth force or more purely spiritual psychology in the future.

In looking at the contents of the retreatants' dreams in this research, we can refer to Berry (1990), who suggested that in our dreams and revelatory visions, we can get in touch with the universal archetypes and then get from them a sense of direction for our lives and work. Herein lies the possibility of a therapeutic role for dream work. Firstly, however, a greater understanding of the deep inner ground of the psyche that dreams emerge from is needed. In fact, as this research has proceeded, an inner psyche structure has indeed become evident, from which dreams emerge at different levels into the conscious mind, giving imaginative forms that describe the depth of the level of consciousness being accessed by the retreatant.

3.2 Transpersonal Research Methods used

Transpersonal research methods need therefore to incorporate the uses of intuition, direct knowing (through personal experience), creative expression, alternative states of consciousness, dreamwork, storytelling, myths, meditation, imagery, emotional and bodily cues, and other internal events as possible strategies and procedures in all phases of research inquiry. Both the topics of research inquiry and the methods employed are potentially transpersonal and spiritual in nature.

Transpersonal research methods, as discussed in the above introduction, may also employ both quantitative and qualitative methods as and when appropriate. However, it was decided from the outset in this study to mainly make use of qualitative research methods and to use quantitative methods to amplify some aspects of the data that were initially explored using qualitative methods.

The theory of the Qualitative Approach: Combining the phenomenological and heuristic approaches with intuitive inquiry and treating the retreat dreams as a narrative

As indicated above, a survey of literature revealed that the appropriate research method would need to cover a broad range of transpersonal-phenomenological fields of inquiry (Moustakas, 1994). Now in qualitative approaches the researcher is the actual measuring instrument and his/her qualities and sensitivities become critically important. All materials are collated, processed, interpreted and expressed through the filters that are the researcher's personal qualities. Furthermore, the values of the field of transpersonal psychology encourage blending and borrowing between research methods and making choices that best suit the topic of inquiry and not necessarily any isolated research approach (Braud & Anderson, 1998). This research method involves several strands or methodological approaches, each contributing to and interweaving with each other, thereby enabling a more effective and appropriate inquiry to be undertaken.

To start with, the phenomenological approach was chosen, to provide a rich and complete description of a human experience and its meaning. This allows the

findings to emerge, rather than being imposed by an investigator. Care is taken to keep descriptions as faithful to the experiential raw data as possible. This seems ideally suited to working with the retreat dreams.

The phenomenological research method

The use of phenomenological research methods, however, depends to some extent on the articulating skills of the participants who provide the dreams. For example, the language and terms employed in existential-phenomenological philosophy and phenomenological inquiry are usually obtuse. Conclusions will depend therefore to some extent on the participants chosen for the study and their ability to describe their experiences.

Thus, without any prior knowledge of this field and without a considerable amount of retreat experience, the phenomenological research method on its own may at best yield an interesting but inconclusive set of results, at worst a very different set of results may be arrived at, given the absence of the researcher's psycho-spiritual transformation experience.

The heuristic research method

The heuristic research method (West, 1996, 1998; Hiles, 2001), first developed by Clark Moustakas (1990), was also chosen as it provides a comprehensive, vivid, accurate and essential depiction of the experiences derived from the researcher's own rigorous self-searching on retreat. The researcher's own experiences of retreat and retreat dreams can be included as a starting point for this study and can then be compared with the dream experiences of the retreatants, which are included in this study. This method also enables the researcher to be involved as a retreat guide, in a manner similar to that of a shaman (Lunt, 1990), i.e. the guide enters the personal world of the retreatant. This possibility was discussed in the literature search. Thus the researcher's experience of the retreatant and of being immersed in the dream texts written down by the retreatant is also recognised as an important part of understanding both the narrative and the themes that emerge from the dream texts.

According to Moustakas the researcher experiences five distinct phases during the research process, using this method. Just how these five stages, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis, were used in the present study is detailed below in section 3.3.

Intuitive inquiry

Intuitive inquiry is a qualitative research method that is needed to help combine the information derived from the phenomenological approaches (themes and metaphors found in the dreams) and the heuristic approach (the researcher's own personal experience of the psycho-spiritual transformation process as well as the researcher's personal experience of being with the retreatant throughout their retreat). Intuitive inquiry is particularly suited to this project since it advocates the inclusion of expanded states of intuitive awareness, including but not limited to various altered states of consciousness, active dreaming, dream incubation and mystical vision.

"In intuitive inquiry, the researcher listens reflectively to her or his own experience and the experience of others. Having chosen a particular facet of human experience as the topic of inquiry, the researcher first thoroughly explores and records the features of her or his experience, or the motivation for undertaking the particular study if the study does not arise from autobiographic experience. Second, throughout the investigation, the researcher uses the results of that inner reflection as an interactive template to listen to the experience of others. This interactive template changes as the inquiry proceeds. As a natural consequence of this cycle of reflective listening, the researcher's understanding expands to include unique as well as integrative features of the experience studied." (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p.83)

The above remarks could apply equally to the present study, i.e. the researcher uses their own experience of sitting and meditating with the retreatant and reflects this back to the retreatant, who in turn reflects upon this feedback. Following the joint meditation, the retreatant tells their dream(s) to the retreat guide (the researcher). Most of the retreats were guided by the researcher, who, after the joint meditation, would listen to and reflect upon the retreatant's dream experiences and their personal

(non-dream) inner experiences at that time of the retreat. The researcher then compared this information with their own intuitive experience of the retreatant's inner state. It should be noted that the retreatants recorded their dreams on tape or wrote them down before this daily meeting took place. In addition, their dream record was not altered in any way after this meeting and was forwarded, once the retreat was completed, to the researcher. Much later the researcher would read the set of retreat dreams afresh and then re-read them repeatedly until a clear intuitive and conceptual understanding of the retreat's process and of the progression of the themes in the dreams was arrived at.

Narrative inquiry

A fourth research method which operates in parallel with phenomenological, heuristic and intuitive inquiry, would be the examination of the retreatant's journal of dreams in the light of a narrative. In a sense the recording of dreams, particularly on a daily basis, is a kind of record of the retreat itself, albeit a record remembered and written down as the retreat progressed. Although the recording of the dream is simply an act of memory committed to paper, the dream itself could be seen as the retreatant's way of making sense of the psycho-spiritual changes taking place in themselves. Thus, the dreams can be seen in the light of an unfolding narrative, a story in which meaning is being created throughout the process and development of the retreat.

Jerome Bruner (1986; 1990) advocates the importance of narrative and story in creating meaning throughout the human cycle of development:

“Narrative is particularly relevant to the field of transpersonal studies. Our stories form the core of our personal identities. Although rooted in specific historical, psychological, or spiritual events, stories plumb the depths of the human psyche, as if searching among the many narrative possibilities for interpretation and subtleties of meaning. Responsive to context, audience, and more recent events, stories unfold differently on each telling, if only slightly. Each telling brings new elements and joins different elements together in the advancing saga of telling the important stories of one's life, or the important

stories of one's community, tribe, or people." (my underlining) (Braud & Anderson, p.23.)

Each dream therefore could be seen as the bringing together, through images and story, emerging new elements, or alternatively the transformation of older elements within the inner world of the retreatant.

"In telling a story, the past as remembered and retold sheds light on the present and implicates the future. We tell stories situated in the present, and, as we tell them, we transport the memories of the past into the present through memory and imagination. Implicitly, the phenomenology of telling a story cycles from present (in which the story is told) to the past (in which the story took place and is retained in memory) to the present again (as it is told) in a line of narrative projectory. The narrative projectory implicates and illuminates not only the present but also the future. The sweep of the narrative seems to bring the future more luminously present and possible because narratives inevitably point forward. Fuelled by the dynamic of narrative, they inherently move forward bearing insight on present and future." (Braud & Anderson, 1988, pp.23-24.)

Each time, the initial phase of reading the retreat dream texts gave the impression of a random set of dreams. However, after several cycles of re-reading the texts it became clear that there was a definite progression of stages of the dreams as well as an organising structure. This constituted a narrative or a structure that could be coded as a narrative.

If the retreat dreams act as an unfolding narrative, then as Bruner suggests the dreams not only tell us what has happened and what is happening in the retreatant's inner world, but they may also imply what will unfold in the retreatant and their retreat dreams later on in the retreat (past implicates the future). Indeed, this was observable as the themes and metaphors emerged early on in the retreat and developed, unfolded and evolved as the retreat progressed. For example, dreams of conflict were followed by dreams showing the end of conflict. Dreams of feeling alienated from the other dream characters were followed by dreams of relating to and being connected with the other characters in the dreams.

Although narrative is employed as one of the research methods, the narrative that emerges from the dreams is not to be regarded as a fictional narrative, but a narrative that emerges out of a phenomenological experience - experience of the retreat. Secondly, in this study, this phenomenon is not being regarded as exclusively psychological, but rather that it emerges from a deeper level in the psyche, transcending our worldly impressions, our upbringing, our family, our psychology. It is argued later in the discussion that the retreat itself is a process of stripping away the layers of memories, impressions, beliefs of the mind, leading eventually to the experience of the transpersonal realms of consciousness, called the subtle 'levels of self'.

Using bodily wisdom and emotions

Several reports of bodily sensations, exhaustion, tiredness, low and high energy, gut feelings, feeling touched in the heart, feeling something in the pit of the stomach, chills, shivers that coincided with the experience of despair/joy and light/dark were included in many of the journal descriptions that accompanied the dream texts. Apart from the usual bodily discomfort of sitting in one position for a long time, most retreatants reported the above mentioned bodily sensations verbally to the retreat guide, who took this information into account as part of their assessment of the state of the retreatant. Thus bodily feedback is taken into account in the guiding of the retreatant as well as supplementary information when reading and understanding the inherent process contained in the dream texts. Braud & Anderson (1998) refer to this as bodily wisdom.

Similarly, emotions and feelings experienced during the retreat such as feeling depressed, feeling lighter, feeling more alive, feelings of 'opening up' are also taken into account in the verbal and written reports that accompany the dream texts. In the psychotherapeutic setting, when the therapist senses feelings, bodily sensations, they use this information together with their insights into and knowledge of the client, in assessing the inner state of the client before making a therapeutic intervention to help facilitate the therapeutic process. Similarly the retreat guide makes use of the same indicators together with their insights into the retreatant's process, their background

knowledge of the retreatant and what spiritual practices to prescribe which will help the transformation process to proceed. Similarly, this information forms part of the process of intuitive inquiry, of exercising judgement in the identifying of themes in the thematic analysis and in the identification of structure within the dream narrative.

Summary: combining the research methods using the Heuristic Approach

To sum up, heuristic inquiry, intuitive inquiry and narrative research methods allow a secondary source of data, the intersubjectivity between the researcher (retreat guide) and the retreatant, and between the dream texts and the researcher, to act as a supplement to the primary source of data - the retreatants' dreams, which are analysed initially using the phenomenological research methods. A description of how the various research methods were combined in this study follows.

3.3 A description of how the various research methods were combined, using the Heuristic process

"One's own self discovery, awareness and understanding are the initial steps of the process." (Moustakas, 1990, p.16.)

Prior to the present study the researcher spent ten years gaining personal experience of the role of dreams in the psycho-spiritual transformation process through the medium of spiritual retreat. Considerable experience was also gained in guiding spiritual retreats and in noticing how dreams can be used as a guide to the inner world of the retreatant during their transformation process. Thus the years prior to the present study constituted the first four stages of the heuristic process: initial engagement, immersion, incubation and illumination, as described by Moustakas (1990), i.e. the idea of using dreams as a means of tracking the transformation process was born out of the researcher's own experience.

However, the heuristic approach, introduced by Moustakas, only gives examples of consciously remembered experiences, which were recorded and re-examined. In his text, Moustakas also includes examples of questions which were used to solicit the experience of other people, as a means of developing a more generalised description

of the phenomena under study. By contrast, this study looks at remembered unconscious experiences, as shown in the retreat dreams recorded by the researcher and other retreatants, combining them into a single textual description that has undergone a thorough process of inquiry. Many retreatants recorded personal comments alongside the dream texts, but these were only used as supplementary information. The present use of the heuristic process therefore drew upon the unconscious dream processes of the retreatants, together with the conscious reflections, experiences and intuitions of the researcher as he attempted to re-experience the inner world of each retreatant, as their process unfolded.

Thus at the outset of this study, even though the first few phases of the heuristic research process had been experienced, the steps of formulating the research question, conducting a literature search, the gathering of the tools and resources needed for the study as well as the research design had yet to be undertaken.

Indeed the formalising and undertaking of the research project itself re-stimulated the first four phases of the heuristic process, enabling the researcher to compare this experience with previous experiences.

Furthermore, immersion, incubation and illumination were encountered again and again as each set of dreams were gathered in and read and re-read.

“Indwelling refers to the heuristic process of turning inward to such a deeper, a more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality or a theme of human experience ... Through indwelling the heuristic investigator finally turns the corner and moves towards the ultimate creative synthesis that portrays the essential qualities and meanings of an experience.” (Moustakas, 1990, p.24-25.)

Each time the researcher had to not only read the record of each set of retreat dreams but he had to try to enter the inner world of the retreatant and try to understand their inner journey (via the dream texts) and the psychic processes that were being invoked as their retreat proceeded. This required much re-reading of and reflection on the available texts.

“In the intuitive process one draws on clues; one senses a pattern or underlying condition that enables one to imagine and then characterize the reality, state of mind, or condition. In intuition we perceive something, observe it, and look and look again from clue to clue until we surmise the truth.” (Moustakas, 1990, p.23.)

Initially, the process seemed unfathomable, particularly after the first reading of the dreams. However, gradually, with each re-reading, the researcher retained more of the features of the dream narratives. Insights and illuminations began tumbling through to conscious awareness as the phases of the retreat, and the various subtle levels of self being transited, became apparent. In the re-reading of the texts and in the entering of the inner world of the retreatant, the essential features of the dream narrative, hidden behind the plethora of personal images and psychological issues, began to emerge.

“The steps of focussing as used in heuristic research include the clearing of an inward space to enable one to tap into thoughts and feelings that are essential to clarifying a question; getting a handle on the question; elucidating its constituents; making contact with core themes; and explicating the themes ... Through the focussing process, the researcher is able to determine the core themes that constitute an experience, identify and assess connecting feelings and thoughts, and achieve cognitive knowledge that includes refinements of meaning and perception that register as internal shifts and alterations of behaviour.” (Moustakas, 1990, p.25.)

Overall, this process clearly involved a synthesis of the heuristic method, intuitive and narrative enquiry, as well as the bodily experiences reported by the retreatants. In the thematic analysis, the phenomenological research method was also used to specifically cull and identify the basic themes inherent in the story of the retreat as each phase and subtle level of self became apparent.

The phenomenological research method also constituted the next phase of the research, Explication. Now the themes were grouped together in terms of qualities to

create a description of the six subtle levels of self evident in the texts. (At this point it became clearly evident that the subtle levels were being encountered in an orderly progression of increasing subtlety. Prior to this, the researcher had only intuited this progression through the successive re-reading of the dream texts.)

The final phase, Creative Synthesis, was achievable only after the researcher had examined all the texts in the manner described above and constructed the templates of the subtle levels of self. At this point, a repeated process of cross-checking of the data began. Firstly, each set of dreams was re-read to see if the themes emerging from the texts were all present in the templates and whether they revealed the classical sequence of the subtle levels of self. These re-readings involved a considerable refining of the templates in which more themes, common to all the retreats, were discovered and then added to the templates.

During the quantitative analysis, i.e. the colour count analysis of the dreams, the texts were again checked for accuracy, by comparing them with the results of the qualitative analysis. Re-checking and re-reading was again necessary when the tables in the analysis were being constructed. Finally, when the results were compared with the Sufi and Tibetan Dream Yoga texts, the data had to be re-read in order to be objectively compared with these older traditions.

The researcher also had recourse to ample volumes of personal retreat dream diaries, compiled between the years 1988 and 1998, as a means of cross-checking his own experiences with those of the retreatants.

“Heuristic processes relate back to the internal frame of reference” (of the researcher). (Moustakas, 1990, p.26.)

In reviewing the results of the heuristic research process the question of validation becomes extremely important. Although the quantitative analysis acted as a cross-check of the qualitative methods, the question of validity still comes back to meaning:

“Does the ultimate depiction of the experience, derived from one’s own rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and from the explications of other present

comprehensively, vividly and accurately depict the meanings and essences of the experience?” (Moustakas, 1990, p.27.)

The above constituted the final round of checking to see whether the phases of the retreat and the subtle levels of self, as earmarked for each set of retreat dreams, accurately reflected the retreatant’s transformation process.

3.4 Applying the research methodology to the study of dreams on retreat

The Thematic Analysis

In the initial reading of the dreams, little sense of the process was evident. But on re-reading, slowly a structure emerged that reminded the researcher of his own experiences of the retreat process, and of his own experiences in guiding the retreat process, and of the alchemical texts of the phases of the retreat. Gradually, the patterns became clearer and so he began to first mark out the phases, and then the levels of self (if they were present) in the dream texts.

The analysis of the themes present in the dream texts proceeded in three steps. Firstly, the emerging themes in the dream texts were underscored along with the corresponding recorded dates, as shown in the dream Appendices (Appendix IV). The essence of the themes was recorded next to the dream texts. The second step involved marking out of the four stages of the retreat process.

Stage One: Turning Within (Nigredo) where the instinctual forces are clearly being encountered in the dreams.

Stage Two: Rising (Albedo) in which the retreatant is clearly experiencing successively more subtle and purer experiences of the self.

Stage Three: Transcendence (Citrinitas) in which some retreatants have (or had) a mystic experience such as being beyond time and space, a profound religious experience, or a profound sense of the Divine.

Stage Four: Rebirth (Rubedo) in which the retreatant experiences a gradual return to their worldly life and worldly self.

Construction of the Templates

The third step was to re-examine the stage of rising (Albedo) in the dream texts. The themes involved in the ascension were first scored in the texts and then read as a narrative. This revealed a series of conscious ‘leaps’ in the narrative. The themes in each ‘leap’ were then grouped together and given an overarching theme or name, e.g. Creative, Loving, etc. Thus the noting of the themes present for each successive subtle sense of self as it was being encountered began. All the subtle senses of self, if they were present, developing in a strict sequential order, were noted and marked out for each retreat, i.e. the Instinctual self (Nigredo stage), the Creative self, the Loving self, the Wise self, the Sacred self and the Pure self.

As the levels of self encountered seemed to be similar for all the retreats, basic templates for each level of self were drawn up, listing the themes common to that sense of self or that phase of the retreat. When all the retreats had been read, and marked, the whole batch of retreats were then re-read and the list of themes for each template was modified or added to, now that a clearer understanding of the levels had been gleaned from repeated re-readings of the dream texts. This iterative process was repeated several times over until a final list of themes for each level of self was constructed. The templates then became a reference for counting up the themes in the thematic analysis.

Research methods for studying the psycho-spiritual transformation process outside of the retreat context

During the study of retreat dreams a supplement to the initial research question arose: Is the narrative structure and model of the levels of self dependent upon the context of the retreat? To answer this question it was decided to a) study the dreams of someone who might be experiencing a prolonged psycho-spiritual transformation but was not engaging in spiritual retreats. In this case the subject reported their dreams to the researcher every two weeks over the telephone and sent the texts by email. And b)

study the dreams of someone who the researcher did not know or have any personal contact with. To this end a series of dreams reported by Jung (1968) was chosen as the subject did not undergo any form of psychotherapy and simply recorded their dreams over a prolonged period, simply reporting them to a trainee of Jung, without receiving any comments or feedback.

The same research approach was employed in both cases, i.e. the qualitative method comprised several strands, i.e. phenomenological, heuristic and intuitive inquiry.

3.5 Quantitative Research Methods

A qualitative research method for analysing the retreat (and ‘off-retreat’) dreams was developed to compare the results using a more simple objective approach as compared with the more complex, subjective qualitative approach. As the increasing appearance of light is a fundamental criterion for the transformation process (Jung, 1968), it was decided to count up the number of times light, colours and dark appeared in successive retreats. The counting was then plotted as a graph of frequency of appearance of colour, light and dark versus time. In the retreat dreams graphs, the counting was done for each day of the retreat. The dreams in the long-term ‘off-retreat’ study, reported by telephone and email to the researcher, were counted up for each month of the year. It was not possible to plot the graphs of colour versus time for the transformational dreams case reported by Jung because no clear timescale was given, i.e. although the length of the reporting period was stated, the times of reporting of each dream was missing. In addition, Jung selected the transformational dreams from clients’ portfolio that he felt were representative of the psycho-spiritual transformation process, whereas the person reporting their dreams by telephone to the researcher personally chose the dreams that they felt were significant to present to the researcher.

This quantitative method provided the possibility of comparison with the results of the qualitative approach.

Ensuring the reliability and consistency of the results, through the use of various research methods

Qualitative methods such as the recording and examination of dreams have great advantages in explaining the transformation process; however they also have the potential weaknesses of inaccurate recording by the participants, excessive subjectivism (in the more extreme cases narcissism) and delusions, although this can to a lesser extent be said of quantitative methods too. To counter these possibilities qualitative methods should aim to enhance the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Techniques such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation of sources, method and investigations and the reflexive journal are suggested (Braud & Anderson, 1998).

Thus to ensure the consistency of the results in this study, the data was gathered through three sources:

- a) short, intermediate and long retreats, including successive retreats.
- b) a prolonged observation of the dreams of a subject who underwent a powerful psycho-spiritual transformation off-retreat that extended itself over two and a half years.
- c) an extended case study of a transformation process reported by Jung.

Thus the data being gathered in a), b) and c) involved a prolonged engagement with the participants' process for the researcher.

Secondly, the above data was reviewed, analysed and reflected on by the researcher and then compared with his private personal retreat dream journal, covering a succession of retreats for over ten years. This resulted in the thematic analysis of the participants' dreams and the templates of the subtle levels of self.

Thirdly, a triangulation of methods was then achieved by:

- 1) a comparison of the researcher's own retreat dream journal with the dream records of the participants in this study, and
- 2) a comparison between the statistical counting of the appearance of colours and light/dark in the participants' dreams and the results of the thematic analysis.

Finally, the results were compared with the traditional Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist texts that describe the role of dreams when guiding an aspirant through a psycho-spiritual transformation process. This comparison appears in Chapter 9, discussion of the results.

3.6 A new paradigm of research

The study of the retreat dreams began by using the combined approaches of the 'phenomenological, heuristic and intuitive inquiry research methods' to identify and categorise the different features of the dreams and observe the unfolding narratives contained in the dream metaphors. Although the themes became evident after some early reading of the texts, the researcher had to draw to some extent upon his own experiential knowledge - gleaned through several years of personal retreats and the study of retreat dreams, in order to recognise these themes, i.e. the researcher had to draw upon his own personal experience of retreat, guiding retreats and of studying his own dreams on retreat, to be able to recognise firstly the themes emerging from the retreat, then the stages of the retreat, and finally identify the levels of self being experienced by the retreatant.

Later, as the researcher developed quantitative methods for analysing the material and re-visited the data over and over again, he became much more familiar with the process. The researcher remembered many more details and recognised connections between themes, metaphors and the progression of the themes that he had not perceived before. Clearly the heuristic research method began to take over in importance from the phenomenological research method which was first employed. The key features of this method seemed to be:

- a) experiential/participatory: This began with the researcher's own personal retreats - this has continued each year since 1988 to the present. Thus a thorough familiarity with the process and the levels of self, together with the guiding of retreats and the study using the available dream data of retreat dreams, has helped to construct a map of the psycho-spiritual transformation experience. It would not have been possible to achieve this without the depth of understanding and the personal participation of the researcher.
- b) connectedness/relatedness: Given the increasing familiarity (intimacy) with the dream material it was as though the researcher had been able to enter the retreatant's inner world and to see it clearly for the first time as opposed to observing the surface features of their world from a distance - and not seeing the depth at all, i.e. one enters into the world of the dreamer as one reads and re-reads the dream texts. This leads to an understanding of the dream and the use of visual metaphors and connections between each metaphor.

Connectedness and relatedness is not simply the intellectual recognising of connections and relationships between the different dream features - it is only experienced fully when you experience the same feelings and perceptions as the dreamer. This is like being at the cinema and in watching the film you experience a change of perspective and of consciousness which is very different to that of a detached, rather uninterested observer of the film - as a participant/observer in the film, one begins to see and experience the story the way the author (film-maker) experiences it. In fact, it is as though you are essentially entering the mind/consciousness of the film-maker. It is this quality of connectedness/relatedness to the retreatant's dream experience that is achieved by participating both as a retreat guide and as a reader of the dream texts.

- c) transformational: As a result of participating in the phenomena being studied, one becomes the subject of the experience through connectedness/relatedness. This results in a change in our consciousness, i.e. you enter the consciousness of the experience or the consciousness behind the experience - perhaps it is the retreatant's consciousness which produces that experience. Thus participation

in the phenomena/process leads to a personal transformation of consciousness in the researcher.

The above research method summons up an entirely new research paradigm (Ferrer, 2000, 2002; Hiles, 2002) - the Spiritual/Heuristic paradigm as distinct from the scientific paradigm (scientific method) and the constructionist paradigm.

In this study, the spiritual/heuristic paradigm was extended from a personal study and experience of the psycho-spiritual transformation process, to that of other people's transformational processes. However, in switching attention from the researcher's own experience to that of others, he began by emphasising the phenomenological method of observing and identifying the experience, and then, without fully realising it, became so immersed in the retreat dreams of the retreat subjects that he began to experience being in their inner worlds. Clearly the research method became heuristic, even though it was no longer the researcher's inner world that he was immersing himself into on retreat, but the inner worlds of others on retreat - this required the forgetting of his experiences and prejudices and "objectively" looking at what others were experiencing. Later this was compared with his own prior experience. The result was a considerable expansion and deepening of his knowledge of the transformational process. The researcher's previous knowledge had been limited in scope and was somewhat basic. Thus, although some knowledge had been gained through the researcher's personal experience of retreats and of guiding retreats, and given that this was essential for the understanding of the retreatant's process and of their dreams, it would not have been possible to have created the templates from the levels of self (templates 1-8) based simply on the researcher's personal experience. The dream material of the retreatants was therefore an essential and necessary step to the creation of the templates in this study.

3.7 The present study and the formation of the Research Question

The present research is concerned with the role of dreams in the study of human psycho-spiritual transformation process whilst on retreat as well as 'off-retreat'. This approach basically involved the collection of people's dreams on and off-retreat. Once the data had been collected, the thematic analysis began.

Now a formal research question could be posed:

- a) Can dreams be used as a means of monitoring the stages of personal change or transformation in the personality whilst on an individual spiritual retreat?
- b) Can dreams also monitor the differing depths or levels of archetypal conscious awareness that are experienced during the process of transformation in the personality?
- c) Further, can dreams be used, in the same manner, as a tool for monitoring personal transformation and the accessing of these levels of consciousness whilst being off-retreat? Typically, this would be whilst undergoing a period of profound inner change.

CHAPTER 4

Research Design

4.0 Introduction

The principal task now was to design a research project in which the role of dreams in the human transformation process could be studied. The challenge of the Research Design was to incorporate the use of transpersonal research methods in the study of dreams on and off-retreat whilst at the same time ensuring the validity of the dream data as well as the research methods being used. Clearly dreams recorded during a psycho-spiritual transformation off-retreat could then be compared with dreams recorded during a retreat. However, it was decided to also include at least one series of dreams with which the researcher had not been associated, and where the dreamer had not been aware of the dream study. This turned out to be a series of dreams collected from a young man (not in analysis) during his experience of a psycho-spiritual transformation, by Carl Jung in the early 1930s (Jung, 1968).

Finally, the practical issues of how many retreats, how many retreat guides other than the researcher, the location of the retreats, selection of the retreatants, the duration of the retreats and whether repeated retreats should be included, had to be addressed.

4.1 Research design philosophy and methodology

The philosophy of the research design and the methodology used for analysis of the results made use of phenomenological and heuristic approaches to dream research. As a result of the reformulation of the research question, the research data was drawn from three main sources: a) the experiences and expertise gained from the researcher's own dreams recorded whilst on retreat, b) the corpus of dreams others recorded whilst on retreat, and c) the dreams of people who were not on retreat. The observations concerning the retreat dreams were to be cross-checked by comparing them with the dreams associated with transformational experiences recorded 'off retreat.' In this way, the question 'Do people who access a particular level of

consciousness during a period of profound or psychological transformation off retreat, have the same or a similar experience of it as people who are on a spiritual retreat?', was addressed.

Another research method, intuitive inquiry, made use of the 'intuitive sense' of the guide as a researcher (Braud and Anderson, 1998). This method uses the researcher's own experience - in this case that of the psychic changes taking place in the retreatant, as experienced by the researcher as a retreat guide. Other experienced retreat guides were also employed in the guiding of retreats. In fact approximately half of the retreats were guided by the researcher and half by other retreat guides. Whilst this enabled more retreats to be included in the study, it also provided a means of checking and limiting the possible influence of the researcher.

Right up to the start of this study, the researcher's own experiences of the retreat process and of guiding previous retreats have acted as a pool of knowledge from which to draw upon, i.e. the basic characteristics of the stages and the levels of consciousness, experienced through guiding others in the retreat process and in his repeated experiences of the same stages and levels of consciousness in his own personal retreats, were already roughly sketched out as a starting point. This pool of experience was also used to help the researcher intuitively sense the dream narrative as it emerged from the repeated reading of the retreat dream texts. Thus the basic and generalised features of the stages and levels of consciousness in the retreat process, which previously had been found in the researcher's own retreats and in the guiding of the previous retreats, were used as a guide in the present corpus of dreams. At the same time, the researcher had paradoxically to be careful not to allow his previous experience to influence his reading of the dream texts or to project his experience onto what was being read.

On reading the dream texts again and again, the process of reading became more objective with the researcher being able to 'see' the dreams objectively and in their entirety. As a result, a considerable amount of new information on the phases and levels of consciousness that were common to all the retreats began to emerge. So, although the researcher began with a basic, yet vital pool of experience and information about the retreat process, the research design in this study was intended to

reveal a considerably greater pool of knowledge, possibly helping to greatly clarify the nature and character of each stage and level of consciousness contained in the transformation process. However, the researcher also acknowledged the dangers of prior knowledge and experience that have a tendency to influence one's subjective perception and judgement. This point remained uppermost in the researcher's mind whilst reviewing and analysing the dream texts.

A second aim of the research design was to see if the psychic changes taking place in the transformation process have definite characteristics that can be felt or experienced, independent of the retreatant, retreat setting, or of the researcher (assuming that the latter have been trained and developed a capacity for picking up this information). In this sense, intuitive inquiry could be used reasonably objectively. However, it is always important for the researcher to repeatedly question their subjective experience of the retreat they are guiding at the time and later, after the retreat has ended, to reflect on the validity of their insights when reviewing the dream texts as a whole.

Initially, the plan was to ask retreatants to record their dreams on retreat, whilst the guide would suggest spiritual practices and meditations for each day. The spiritual practices given to the retreatant were basically the same in all cases. In this way such a consistent approach to each retreat enabled the researcher to see if the dreams were being used as a guide or monitor of the stages and levels of consciousness being accessed on the retreat or not. Some retreats were undertaken by people completely unfamiliar with the experience of retreat or of the use of spiritual practices whilst others had considerable experience and familiarity with both.

In approximately half the cases, the retreatants, having recorded their dreams at night, did not report their dreams to their guide. The remainder of the retreatants, having recorded their dreams at night, reported these to the guide (the researcher) on a daily basis. The 'intuitive sense' that the guide (the researcher) experienced or picked up from the retreatant was compared with the retreatants dreams so as to assess what meditative practice might be helpful to enable the retreatant to progress further on their retreat. The intuitive sense that the other (non-dream) guides picked up from the retreatants was used on its own to assess what meditative practice might be prescribed. This would enable a comparison of the results of those retreatants who

were guided through the use of dreams and intuition, to be made with the results of those who were guided only by the intuition of their retreat guide.

However, the issue of obtaining as accurate as possible a record of the dreams was extremely important. To this end it was stressed that retreatants record their dreams on paper the moment they wake up. The retreatant was asked to wake at 3am and record any dreams from early on in the night, and then go to sleep and wake again at 5.30am and record their dreams. Any dreams remembered during the day (rest periods) were also recorded immediately upon waking. No encouragement or criticism was fed back to the retreatants if they did or did not remember their dreams.

Duration of the Retreats

It was decided to include short retreats (6-15 days), intermediate retreats (21-30 days) and long retreats (30-40 days) in the data. Shorter retreats are more suitable for beginners and inexperienced retreatants. Long retreats are undertaken only after the candidate has completed a number of successful short and intermediate length retreats. This would also give the researcher the opportunity to compare the impact of the duration of the retreat upon the retreatant.

4.2 The Participants

The participants in this project fell into three basic categories:

- a) retreatants guided by the researcher and by other retreat guides;
- b) a single long-term naturalistic case study of dreams recorded by a woman in her fifties, during a psycho-spiritual transformation process. The dreams were reported directly to the researcher by the participant;
- c) a single long-term naturalistic case study of dreams recorded by a young man during the 1930s, reported to an analyst. No interpretation or analysis of the dreams or of the young man's inner world was attempted.

Retreatants

The retreatants were chosen carefully. Firstly to screen out from a psychological standpoint any potentially unstable participants; secondly, to ensure that a sufficiently good understanding of the retreat process was evident, that is they were used to remembering dreams and to recording them carefully. In some cases the method of data collection was varied, i.e. approximately half of the retreatants were guided by guides other than the researcher to see if this influenced the retreat dreams in any way.

A screening process therefore involving the assessment of a potential participant's personal suitability was necessary. This screening process covered the following questions/criteria:

1. Has the participant any background of mental instability? Has the participant been on medication or had reason to seek out psychiatric/psychological help in the past five years?
2. Is the potential participant able to observe silence for the duration of the retreat? Do they have an interest in and are they able to cope with the spiritual discipline of meditation as well as being alone for the duration of the retreat?
3. Does the potential participant have a sincere interest in retreat and in the process of spiritual transformation?

It was important for the retreat guide to personally interview the aspiring retreatant and be reasonably satisfied, to the best of their ability, that the above criteria were being met. Participation depended upon answering no to question one and yes to questions two and three. In addition the retreat procedure was such that inexperienced prospective retreatants were encouraged to undertake a short retreat first (P.W. (i) was an exception, however, undertaking an intermediate retreat first). Typically, this would be between five and twelve days. If successful, then a second intermediate retreat, of longer duration, say up to twenty-one days, could be attempted. If successful, then a long retreat of between thirty and forty days could be attempted. Again, it was up to the retreat guide to assess as to whether the retreatant was ready to

undertake a retreat for a particular duration. Data was then collected from retreatants who undertook short retreats, intermediate retreats and from those who experienced the advanced long retreats. The full list of retreatants is included in appendix II.

A breakdown of the age ranges of the retreatants is included below.

Two retreatants were between 30 and 40 years of age.

Six retreatants were between 40 and 50 years of age.

Five retreatants were between 50 and 60 years of age.

One retreatant, P.W., passed the age of 60 years during his series of retreats.

Retreat Environment

In each case the retreatant remained alone in a small retreat room free of worldly distractions like radio, television, telephones, cell-phones, I-pods, or interactions with other people. The retreat guide visited them once a day for approximately thirty minutes to one hour. A simple non-dairy, vegetarian meal was served once a day in the evening. Breakfast and lunch were light, involving fruit or breakfast cereal and a herbal tea. No alcohol, cigarettes, stimulants or drugs were permitted.

Retreat Schedule

Retreatants woke up at 3am and recorded their dreams (if remembered) and carried on with their night meditation until 4am. They slept until 5.30am and woke up, again recording any remembered dreams. Early morning purification and meditation practices continued until 7am when the retreat guide would visit the retreatant. Spiritual practices resumed at 8am until lunch, which allowed an hour for resting, washing and nourishment. After lunch, practices resumed again until evening, around 6pm when a light, hot meal was served. The evening break lasted for an hour, followed by a resumption of the spiritual practices until 9pm, when the subject could, if they chose, retire to bed. Some chose to stay up longer with their meditations. The day would begin again at 3am. Any dreams during the breakfast or lunch break were also recorded.

Choice of a subject 'off retreat'

Two years into the retreat dreams study, the researcher encountered a suitable subject who had just completed five years of Jungian analysis. Now in her fifties, she was beginning to experience some profound inner changes in her spiritual life. As soon as she heard of the research, she volunteered to report her dreams every two weeks to the researcher by telephone. Her dream reports were then sent by email first, followed by a half hour telephone conversation to discuss the dream sequence briefly. This involved eliciting her own thoughts and feelings about the dreams, looking as well at what was happening in her life at the time of the dreams. Little interpretation was given apart from pointing out the more obvious features of the dreams and noting the common themes that repeated themselves in the dreams. She was not involved in any retreats or psychotherapy during the dream reporting period of two years. This case study opened up the possibility of comparing the retreat dreams with someone who was experiencing a psycho-spiritual transformation 'off-retreat'. Secondly this was an opportunity to include a long-term naturalistic study in the data, compared with the relatively short term duration of the retreats.

Choice of a subject unknown to the researcher

In Jung (1968) the dreams of a young man, who was undergoing a psycho-spiritual transformation over a period of one year, were reported and discussed in detail. The subject simply reported their dreams to an analyst who provided no interpretation or discussion of the dreams. The record of the dreams was passed on to Jung who then recorded his own interpretations. Thus the subject (who for practical purposes was unknown to Jung) was not involved in any retreat activity or psychotherapy. In addition he died many years ago and thus did not know of the research or the researcher in this study. In his study, Jung chose the significant dreams for interpretation whereas in the present study the woman who volunteered her dreams 'off-retreat' chose what she thought were significant dreams to present to the researcher. In the case of the retreatants above, all remembered dreams were reported. This case enabled the researcher to look at the possible influence of the researcher and/or the influence of the theory of retreats and the transformation process on the dream data.

4.3 Data Collection

As the subject of retreat dreams is a rather specialised one, it came as no surprise that the collection of retreat dreams was an issue in itself. Several people who were undertaking spiritual retreats within the Sufi Order of the West, the organisation which the researcher used as a resource for the retreat dreams study, were interested in participating in this study and yet there were insufficient numbers of participants to enable an even distribution of gender, cultural background, age or retreat location to be achieved in the retreat population sample. However, the number of retreats guided by the researcher, thirteen, was approximately the same as the number guided by retreat guides other than the researcher, ten. As it turned out, two retreats guided by the researcher had to be discarded because of the mixing of waking and dream images. This left eleven retreats, guided by the researcher that could be included in the data collection. One retreat, not guided by the researcher, was also discarded because of a conflict between the guide and the retreatant. This left nine retreats, not guided by the researcher, that could be included in the data collection. To sum up, a total of twenty retreats were finally included in the data collection that was analysed.

The researcher attempted to include retreat dreams from the Buddhist tradition but had little response and therefore no other retreat dream data was included. It was therefore decided to include as broad and diverse a sample of retreatants as possible provided that the main criteria to be satisfied for inclusion were those specified in section 4.2 above.

In all, twenty-three sets of retreat dreams were collected from fourteen retreatants, of whom five were male and nine were female. This represented a body of over 1000 retreat dreams. Later, to check for the possibility of bias in the retreat setting, a further series of over 240 dreams were collected from a) a subject who had not been on retreat or in psychotherapy but who had recorded them during a period of extraordinary transformation of themselves, and b) 67 dreams from a series recorded by a subject who was not in psychotherapy and who had never experienced a spiritual retreat, but who had recorded dreams during a period of profound transformation in their personal life. The above categories a) and b) were to be compared with the

retreat dreams so as to test the consistency of the research results. One retreatant recorded her 40 day retreat as it proceeded onto tape. This had to be transcribed into a typed text.

Retreat dream data has been collected principally from the Sufi retreat centre in London. However, data from retreats guided in the annual Swiss Alps Sufi Meditation camps and dreams from retreats undertaken at a few Sufi retreat centres in the USA were also used. This data showed a spread in age range from mid-thirties to mid-sixties, and included five men and nine women. The retreatants selected also represented a broad cultural range that included British, North and Central European, West Indian, Chinese, American and Middle Eastern participants (Hamilton, 1998), who in total all completed 23 retreats. See Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Cultural background of the Retreatants:

Cultural background	No. of Retreatants
British	4
Dutch	1
German	2
Danish	1
Croatian	1
Afro-Caribbean	1
Kurdish	1
Chinese-American	1
European-American	2

4.4 Monitoring the psycho-spiritual transformation through the reading of the dream texts and the corresponding personal comments

The object of this study is to investigate whether dreams can act as a mirror or monitor of the psycho-spiritual transformation process during the retreat and outside of the retreat context. Thus the retreatants were asked to record all remembered dreams throughout the retreat.

In most cases, the retreatants included their personal comments with the dream texts, such as changes in moods and feelings and sense of self as the retreat progressed. These proved to be helpful when reading the dream texts as they sometimes gave the reader clues to understanding the dreams. During the retreats, personal comments were also monitored and noted by the retreat guide who then suggested meditation and spiritual practices which might assist the retreatant with their difficulties or which might help to draw out an emerging quality or spiritual experience/sense. This method of working with a retreatant is similar to the role of the psychotherapist who will make interventions of a psychological nature to help or support the client's process.

Similarly, the subject chosen for a long term study (two years) of dreams during a psycho-spiritual transformation process also recorded comments about her process along with their dream texts. However, the study of Jung's client, who reported dreams over a period of time, did not include journal notes or comments on their process. Instead, Jung made extensive comments of his own on this man's psycho-spiritual transformation process.

4.5 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues with respect to the research

The issues to consider in this project centred around trust, informed consent, confidentiality, freedom for the participants to participate or withdraw, access by the participants to the material for checking accuracy and appropriateness of the written material, avoidance of harm to the participants, and post-retreat support, if required. The implications of these issues, with the exception of post-retreat support, are dealt with comprehensively by Mcleod (1994).

The potential participants were given a written statement describing the request for the recording of their dreams on retreat, the aims of the research as well as the procedures and information about the retreat (see appendix III). Their dreams would therefore form part of a body of retreat dream data to be analysed for a PhD thesis.

They were informed that the dream material to be included would be submitted for their consent and approval before being finally included in the thesis.

Informed consent was obtained from each participant. Permission was obtained to use whatever material was deemed necessary for the PhD study and for its publication. A copy of this consent is included as appendix IV. Each participant read and approved their dream texts that were included in this study.

The dream material, personal journal notes, as well as the names of the people who took part in this research, has been regarded as confidential. All means of personal identification have been changed so as to protect the privacy and personally shared material of the participants.

Any texts that have been recorded on computer disks have been filed away carefully in a locked steel cabinet in the researcher's home. No-one else has access to this material. All other records relating to this material held on computer have been erased.

Participants were informed via the information sheet and consent agreement that all means of personal identification in their written submissions and in the thesis would be altered. If any participant did not want their written submissions, or part of their written submissions to be included in the study, this would be honoured. They would have the right to modify, give consent or withdraw their dream records throughout the research process. A refusal to participate in the project would not influence the guide's attitude towards them during the retreat.

It was essential to ensure that the dream records of the participants, received by the researcher, were exactly as submitted by the participants. Hence the typed copies of their dream records that were to be included were returned to them for checking before being finally included in the thesis.

The participants were informed through the information sheet and research agreement that this material was to be used for a PhD thesis. Further, that the results of this

thesis would be presented at conferences on dream research and that, ultimately, the thesis would be published. All means of personal identification would be altered.

Ethical issues arising out of the retreat process

Trustworthiness

The trust placed by the retreatant in both the retreat guide and in the researcher was essential to achieve a high level of honesty and openness on the part of the participants, particularly when revealing their dreams and other relevant personal experiences to the retreat guide or to the researcher, or both. This quality is best established by the researcher through an attitude of openness and accountability throughout the research process (Bond, 2004). Accordingly, an information sheet and consent agreement was supplied to each potential participant.

Managing the risks involved in the retreat process

It was necessary to give careful consideration to any risks that might have arisen as a result of the retreatant's participation in the retreat process (Bond, 2004). This had to be balanced against the integrity of the research work being undertaken. Clearly in this study the retreat guide would have to be responsible for managing the risks involved for the retreatant during a personal spiritual retreat. This included acknowledging the vulnerability of the retreatant as their psychological issues emerged during the retreat. The researcher, on the other hand, would be responsible for ensuring that the retreat guides communicated what was required from the retreatant for the research project, provided the retreatant was in full agreement as to their participation in the research.

In this study a standard information sheet and consent agreement was given to the retreatant for their perusal before the retreat began. If they recorded their dreams, then they would have the option of submitting them to the researcher along with a signed consent agreement. The guide also familiarised themselves with this information and agreement as part of their process of participation in this project.

Any questions or concerns were cleared with the researcher before the retreat took place.

It was also important to ensure that each retreatant was not being pitched into a psychic depth or a stress that they could not cope with, i.e. that the retreat should not be damaging psychologically in any way (Mcleod, 1994). As it so happened, all the retreatants had a positive experience, although they did have several moments of great inner struggle during the retreat.

Although each potential retreatant was familiarised with the living conditions such as 'solitary confinement', silence, a very simple diet, and no reading or music and a demanding programme of spiritual practices, it was also necessary to assess their maturity, stability and inner resilience for such an undertaking. Other factors such as the emergence of powerful emotions as a result of the practices was also discussed with the candidates. However, part of the role of the guide is to be supportive of the retreatant so as to enable the retreatant to process their feelings and move on. If in the guide's opinion, or if it is the retreatant's wish, the retreat should stop. In such a case it is the guide's responsibility to ensure that the retreatant has the opportunity to process their feelings and the experience with the guide before leaving to return to their homes. In all cases, the guide's responsibility is to ensure that the retreatant is in a fit condition to leave after their retreat.

Interestingly, this situation is more likely to occur for retreatants who undertake short retreats. Long retreats by contrast usually bring about a great inner stability in the retreatant whereas short retreats can expose issues that need sufficient time to deal with. In exceptional cases retreats will necessitate a few counselling sessions between the guide and the retreatant after the retreat. Fortunately, none of the candidates experienced any such problems.

Thus an important factor is to ensure the retreatant is as prepared as possible before the retreat, that they are supported during the retreat, and that sufficient de-briefing time is allowed for at the end so as to enable them to integrate their experience and take away something of personal value for themselves.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis of the Retreat Dreams

5.0 Overview

Twenty-three retreats were undertaken by fourteen retreatants. One retreatant accounted for six successive retreats, four retreatants each undertook two successive retreats, leaving nine retreatants who undertook one retreat only.

Of the twenty-three retreats analysed, two retreats (M.H.(i) and R.J.(i)) were discarded as much of the imagery recorded was from a waking state, lumped in with the dreams. One retreat, P.W. (iv), was also discarded because of the breakdown in the relationship between the guide and the retreatant. The latter material seemed to have overshadowed the dreams reports. This left twenty analysed retreats that could be used for inclusion in the corpus of dream data.

Of the twenty retreats included, nine were short retreats (6-15 days), eight were intermediate retreats (21-30 days) and three were long retreats (30-40 days).

The purpose of the analysis was to study the content of the dreams to see if they could monitor the process of a psycho-spiritual transformation. A thematic analysis was first undertaken to discover the themes present in the retreats. Out of this the themes that were common to all the retreats were then noted. If a structure of levels of consciousness being accessed during the retreat existed, then perhaps the themes might reveal this. Similarly, if the retreat process did indeed have stages of transformation, then the themes would presumably reveal this. Later, following the thematic analysis, a quantitative analysis, counting the number of times light, dark and colour appeared in the dreams, was undertaken to act as a comparison with the results of the thematic analysis. The latter idea arose out of Jung's comment (1968) that the subject experiences an increasing amount of light in their dreams and imagery as the transformation process continues.

5.1 The Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis was undertaken for each retreat with a view to sifting out the themes present in the dream texts. At first, each set of retreat dreams were read and re-read until the researcher recognised the retreat narrative in the dreams. The themes were then summarised and placed alongside the dream texts. On reviewing the themes it became apparent that they basically described the dream narrative, like a thread, linking dream to dream, night after night (Appendix V). During this process the researcher recognised that the essence of many of the themes in the texts had previously been present in his personal retreat as well as in the retreats he had guided in the past. However, there were several themes, new to the researcher's pool of retreat experience, that also presented themselves in the retreat dream texts.

The next step was to write out the themes in sequence as they appeared in the texts. At this point the stages of the retreat process became apparent. This procedure was repeated for each set of retreat dreams. The initial stage of the retreat, *nigredo*, showed the first cluster of themes to be centred around the instincts such as fear, anger, death, greed and sexuality. Negative feelings predominated. The themes of chaos, untidiness and disorder were also prevalent. As a result this was called the Instinctual self.

However, before describing the second stage of the retreat process, *albedo*, it is necessary to introduce the term 'a subtle sense of self'. This term has been coined by the researcher to describe the experience of a very different kind of consciousness that takes over or emerges into the retreatant's awareness at this point of the retreat. This is based on personal retreat experience, and on the experience of guiding other retreatants prior to the present study. A subtle sense of self refers then to the experience of feelings, thoughts and sensations as becoming subtle or very gentle, yet impersonal. One's sense of self becomes sensitive to and overcome by these experiences to the extent that one's identity becomes porous, i.e. it could clinically be described as a 'dismorphic experience of the body becoming porous'. This state is often experienced when undergoing a profound psycho-spiritual transformation (Hamilton, 2003; 2004).

In the second stage the clusters of themes then changed radically in the dreams to become (in sequence) creativity, loving, conflicts and the resolving of conflicts, sacredness and purity. Not all retreats revealed this complete sequence. Some retreats progressed no further than the appearance of the creative self in the dreams, some stopped after the conflicts had been resolved (Wise self), some stopped after a refined or subtle sense of purity had been reached in the dreams (Sacred and Pure selves), and some retreats carried on further. To sum up, this sequence, from creativity to purity, represented an increasing degree of clarity, resolution, peacefulness, sacredness and subtlety in the dreams. Basically then the second stage of the retreat represented an ascent in consciousness, with the retreatant accessing increasingly subtle levels of consciousness as the retreat progressed. The dreams also seemed to be mirroring an increasing sense of subtlety during their waking experiences on retreat. It seemed that each cluster of themes at this stage characterised an increasingly subtle sense of self.

If the retreatant was able to go more deeply into the transformation process, a third stage appeared in which the themes in the dreams showed an increasingly impersonal sense of self (or lack of self) and where spiritual themes such as light and spirit predominated (citrinitas). This was then followed by a sudden change in the themes, when a fourth stage, a return to the worldly, more human type of themes began to emerge in the dreams continuing to the end of the retreat (rubedo). In some cases, the retreatant proceeded directly from the second stage to the fourth, apparently missing out the third stage altogether.

This completed the cycle of dreams which had involved an ascent and a descent in the levels of consciousness accessed by the retreatant.

Themes in the Dream Texts

The retreat dream texts are to be found in the dream appendices V and VI. The texts show the marking of the stages and levels of self. The levels of self for each retreat together with the significant themes and the dream texts that contain them are presented in appendix V. The name of each retreatant, the year and the length of the retreat and the level of self are shown on each page.

In appendix V, the significant parts of the dream paragraphs that indicate a theme are underlined in the dream texts. The day of the retreat, and the time the dream was recorded, is indicated on the left of the text and the essence of the theme is recorded on the right side of the text. By reading the themes listed on the right hand side of the page in sequence it is possible to follow the progress of the retreat as it unfolded.

An example of how the themes appeared in the first two stages of the retreat undertaken by R.J.(ii) and how they appeared to show the different subtle levels of self (which follow on from the instinctual self) is included below in Dream Data Sheet 5.1. The theme clusters are summarised for each level of self by a heading, for example Creative Self, etc. Comments on the retreat by the researcher are also included. The dream themes are listed in the order that they appeared on retreat.

The phrases containing the themes for each sense of self are summarised and grouped below in italics. The researcher’s notes are in regular type face.

Dream Data Sheet 5.1: R.J. (ii)

<u>Stage 1:</u>	<i>Neglected, unkempt garden</i>	<u>Day 1</u>
<u>Instinctual self themes:</u>		
	<i>Frustration and bitterness of mother</i>	<u>Day 2</u> (waking image)
	<i>Fire damage to flats</i>	<u>Dream 2am</u>
<u>Day 2, dream 5am</u>	<i>In Africa, toilet out of control, danger</i>	
(not in dream)	<i>Primeval images of slugs, worms, terrifying snakes</i>	
(not in dream)	<i>Partner’s sexuality is questioned, an angry man</i>	

Dream Data Sheet 5.1: R.J. (ii) continued

<u>Stage 2:</u>	
<u>Creative self:</u>	<i>Inspiring and uplifting images in mind (image in meditation)</i>
<u>Day 4</u>	<i>Image of glass vessel - fire and light (image in meditation)</i> <i>Beautiful patterns appearing in mind (image in meditation)</i>
<u>Dream 12 noon</u>	<i>R.J. is central character in a play. She exposes a cowardly man</i> <i>Quaternity symbol 4</i> <i>Strong masculine figure enters her room</i> <i>Mercurial actor figure appears to her</i>
<u>Dream 4.30am</u>	<i>Healing of a little boy's penis</i>
<u>Day 5 3am dream</u>	<i>R.J. meets a famous actor. Meets funny male actor again</i> <i>Metal is being prepared for something</i>
<u>5am dream</u>	<i>Distorted, loud male figure</i> <i>New design for a dress</i>
<u>Day 6, 3am</u>	<i>Celebration</i> <i>Looking to change clothes</i>
<u>Loving self</u>	
<u>Day 6 dream 5am</u>	<i>Beauty, clarity, purity, grace, loving</i>
<u>dream 5am</u>	<i>Beautiful landscape</i>
<u>dream 11pm</u>	<i>Celebration</i>
<u>Wise self</u>	
<u>-ve phase</u>	
<u>Day 7, dream 3am</u>	<i>At work</i> <i>Tennis match between two people</i> <i>Partner goes to resort of Split</i> <i>Football trophy</i> <i>Partner and male friend playing sporting games</i> <i>New male friends appears</i>
<u>Day 8, dream 2am</u>	<i>Darkness in house, light of stars</i> <i>Celebration. Then ...</i> <i>... a restaurant is divided in half</i> <i>antagonism between male and female</i> <i>R.J. sees her 'male side' reflected in mirror</i> <i>He is wearing a silver costume. Not frightening</i>
<u>Dream 5.30am</u>	<i>Travelling</i> <i>Man abusing a woman. Abuse stops. Abused woman can leave now</i>
<u>+ve phase</u>	<i>Course on Art of Joy of Living</i>
<u>Day 9, dream 3am</u>	<i>R.J. sees her bed and herself bathed in white light</i>
<u>End of Stage Two</u>	<i>End of retreat on Day 9</i>

Researcher’s Comments The main theme was the resolving of the male/female conflict and development of a more positive inner masculine figure. This retreat, and the themes listed, covered the first two stages of the transformation process, i.e. Nigredo and Albedo. The levels of self accessed are listed alongside each completed stage.

- Nigredo - Instinctual Self
- Albedo - Creative Self
- Loving Self
- Wise Self.

A second example, in which all four stages of the retreat, and all the subtle levels of self in Albedo were accessed, is included below in Dream Data sheet 5.2.

Dream Data sheet 5.2: S.L.

<u>Stage 1: Instinctual self</u>	
<u>Day 1</u>	<i>Old crone is reluctant to give up old habits (old habits)</i> <i>Mrs Thatcher’s legs are bandaged to the knee (damage)</i> <i>Mrs T. is haranguing people with her umbrella “the past is over”</i> <i>She is crippled - her time is finished</i>
<u>Day 2</u>	
<u>Dream 1</u>	<i>Men are courting me. I take one of them home with me (sexuality)</i>
<u>Dream 4</u>	<i>I feel there is some dishonesty</i> <i>There are also some pills, illegal drugs</i> <i>My mother takes a pill</i>
<u>Stage 2: Creative Self</u>	
<u>Day 3</u>	<i>My guide comes to see me. I say “I’m in a very different place” (much better)</i>
<u>Dream 1</u>	<i>Old man, woman, little girl and a dog come down hill (quaternity symbol)</i> <i>I think the old man is blind, child has glasses with a patch on one side (old man and child can’t see)</i> <i>Dog and cat, previously enemies, are now friends (instincts friendly)</i>

Dream Data sheet 5.2: S.L. continued

Loving Self

Day 3

Dream 1 *Child tells me woman has re-gained sight in one eye } re-gaining
Child and old man are not blind } sight
Upon waking I am given bluebells and sweet smelling pure white freesias
(colourful flowers)
No dream I see a gold cone and web through the third eye (gold)*

Wise Self

-ve phase: *Alarm is ringing*
Day 4, *S.L., police, fire engine and child in push chair (quaternity symbol)*
dream *Child has a red apple-cheeked face (red)
A strong smell of fire (fire)*
No dream *When waking, there is a strange burning sensation in my left eye
(burning sensation)*
+ve phase *A new road outside the Centre is being made (new road)*
Day 5, *There is a path of silver pebbles (silver pebbles)*
dream *It (path) divides to form a cross
Sometimes (cross) is of silver and sometimes it's wood (cross of silver,
wood)*

Sacred Self

Day 6, *Henry Cooper is gentle, friendly with large warm hands (man is gentle,*
dream 1 *friendly and safe)
Sense of an impending unity (with male) (union of male, female)
(not in dream) As I awake I see a gold and blue peacock brooch (gold,
blue peacock)
It brings me a winged caduceus (winged caduceus)*

Pure Self

Day 6 *I'm in snow covered mountains (white snow)
I hear the Allegri 'Miserere' (Allegri 'Miserere')
A swan gets out of an icy lake (white swan)
It breaks through the ice and lands in front of a snow covered forest
(snow covered forest)
It shakes its wings and prepares to fly (wings and flight)
I am a bride in a white robe (bride in white)
Voice says "Your veil is a waterfall of light." (light)*
Day 7 *Throughout the dream I feel very light and a detached observer (light and*
Dream *detached)*
No dream *As I come back from sleep I come in through white, black and gold
triangles and as I wake there is a flash of deep purple blue (4 colours)*

Dream Data sheet 5.2: S.L. continuedStage 3: Little or no sense of self, an impersonal stage, transcendent themes appear

Day 8 *There is a very young king and older queen, they are getting married*
 (royal alchemical marriage)
 I am getting married, there is a Buddhist ceremony
 Christmas, 3 young men carry out ceremony, where they receive gifts (3
 men)
 Singing in tenor voices. Animals are let in, very gentle, well-behaved
 I mask my devotion to and love of god (masks love of God)
 A lonely place to be (lonely place to be)

Day 9

Dream 1 *I woke up to a buzzing sound* (inside me) (inner buzzing sound)

Dream 2 *Dream of purification*

No dream *Wake up with sound of 'ananda' in my mind and feeling of nothingness*
 and great peace (no self and great peace)

Stage 4: integrating all levels of self

Day 10, *She wanted something sweet and sticky, somewhere fashionable (return*
dream 1 *of earth desires)*
 With Royal Family, my self, Queen, Queen Mother and Prince Charles
 (quaternity symbol)

No dream *On waking, an inner torch shining gold light in my left eye* (gold light)

Day 11 *Ex-husband persuades me to move to bleak city flat with no garden on a*
Dream 1 *high street (back in city, world)*
 Walking down High Street
 Gaudy silver clothes (silver)

Dream 2 *Pregnant woman taxi driver, taking me home (re-birth back into world)*
 I make preparation for birth

Day 12 *Returning to Heathrow Airport (back home)*
Dream *I bring 3 very large diamonds through customs* (3, treasure)
 I get phone number of a 3rd person who is a male cross dresser
 (androgynous image)
 Put 3 diamonds in crown, 3rd eye and heart

No dream *I wake up in night and I see gold light in the air* (sees gold light)

Comment: This was one of two retreats in which the feeling of 'no self' (nothingness) is experienced. This is considered to be a transcendental state of consciousness, ie beyond duality, no awareness of any self or any thing other than self (Merrell-Wolf, 1973). See S.L. Day 9 in appendix V. Since Day 6, upon waking, each time

(underlined above) she has had a vision (not imagination). As she approaches the end of the retreat these visions (upon waking from sleep) become increasingly to do with a golden light. In the alchemical texts (Jung, 1968, 1983; Edinger, 1991, 1993) this stage, rubedo, was concerned with the descent of the golden light from the transcendent state, back into the world of form, the earth. Often the metaphor of sunset or a red-sunset is used to symbolise this stage. This retreat showed the four stages and six levels of self.

In reviewing the retreat dreams, approximately half of the retreats revealed the four stages. In alchemical terms these four stages are Nigredo (descent into the dark unconscious mind), Albedo, the white stage, representing an ascent in consciousness to realise a purer sense of self, Citrinitas, the yellow stage, representing the transcendental stage of no self, and Rubedo, representing the return to the physical body and the world (Jung, 1968).

To sum up, the thematic analysis of the dream corpus revealed not only four clear retreat stages, but six subtle senses of self. The sequence of appearance of the four stages in the retreat and the corresponding subtle levels of self that are accessed, is listed below in the Table below.

Table 5.0 Stages and Levels of Self in the process

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Level of self</u>
Nigredo	Instinctual self
Albedo	Creative self Loving self Wise self (conflicts appear and are resolved) Sacred self Pure self
Citrinitas	No self
Rubedo	Integration of all levels of self

5.1.1 Templates which characterise the levels of self

Templates 1-8 were constructed by reviewing the themes listed in the dream texts and then extracting the cluster of themes associated with the first stage, Nigredo, which contains the Instinctual Self template, followed by the themes associated with each step of the ascent (albedo), templates 2 to 6, for each retreat. The themes that were common to all the retreats for each step of the ascent formed the basis for that template. A name was given to each template which seemed to describe that particular cluster of qualities. Some themes in the retreatants' texts were not common to all retreats. However, if they seemed related to a particular template, and had been found within a cluster of themes in the dream text which clearly matched that template, they were added in to the template's list of themes to broaden its scope and to give a more complete picture of that level of self. The qualities that were similar within each template were grouped together to emphasise a particular theme. No items associated through the reading of the research literature on Sufism, Buddhism or any other spiritual tradition were included in the templates nor any personal association through the author's own prior retreat experience. The dreams provided the themes. The templates were then drawn up from the themes representing descriptions of each level of self. The templates therefore were constructed from the retreatants' dream material.

Many of the qualities listed for each sense of self in the templates are similar or related to each other. However, in the Creative self and the Wise self, in which the number of themes listed was considerable, many qualities were similar to each other but some themes seemed unrelated to the others. Possibly clusters of related qualities within these two levels of self may exist. Template 4, for example, shows a division of the themes of the Wise self into two sets of qualities, one being negative, marked as the -ve phase of the Wise self in the dream texts, and the other group as positive, marked as the +ve phase of the Wise self in the dream texts. Thus, in the level of the Wise self, one obvious division is between two groups of qualities, one dark and one light. The struggle for the retreatant therefore is to transform the dark distorted qualities into lighter and clearer qualities. Many of the distortions of anger and violence listed in the -ve Wise self become transformed into qualities of clarity, openness, directness and a sense of self-empowerment in the positive phase of the

wise self. Overall in the retreat process, it seems the levels of self begin with the instincts in the Nigredo phase, but during the Albedo stage, they become increasingly ethereal and reflective (of light), resulting in an almost porous sense of self (porous to light) in the Pure self. At this stage the orientation is more towards light than towards matter (Jung 1968). The themes common to Citrinitas (no self) and Rubedo, the return to the world, and the re-integration of each level of self, are listed in templates 7 and 8 respectively.

Following the construction of the templates for each level of self, 'thick descriptions' of each corresponding plane of consciousness (level of self) were created using the themes listed for each level of self.

The 'thick descriptions' were created only out of the retreatants' dream material, although the literature search references were briefly used, when appropriate, to support, amplify or elucidate some of the descriptions of the planes.

Template 1: The Instinctual self

1. Death
2. Appearance of instincts (violence, anger, rage, sexual seduction, greed, hunger, jealousy, envy, bigotry) → transmutation of instincts
3. Controlling/out of control behaviour
4. Darkness
5. Mess, pollution, chaos, disorder, dirt, unclean
6. Healing
7. Turning within to inner world (away from the outer world)
8. Lost, sad, despair
9. Danger, destruction
10. Proliferation of instincts (insects, proliferation of rats)
11. Sickly body parts
12. False self
13. Learning difficulties
14. Worldly concerns such as money, status, power

Template 2: The Creative self

Emphasising mind, artificially made things, talents, interests, the world of imagination (theatre, film). Changes from a 'heavier' to a 'lighter' atmosphere.

1. Greater clarity in dream and in mind. Changes from heavier atmosphere of the Instinctual self to a lighter, more positive atmosphere. Colours appear, green. Sense of a new perspective then appears, as a kind of treasure.
2. Talents - artistic, musical, literary, antiques, musicians, stamps.
Interests - artistic, musical, literary, sports, etc. Famous people
3. Celebration/festival.
4. Beauty of architecture, pictures, music. Fabricated beautiful objects.
5. Thinking function - emphasised. Being clever/being stupid. Life scripts - (negative) perceptions.
6. Creativity. Ideas come to the retreatant.
7. Mind activities (professional work situations), learning, balancing/restructuring of mind and new identity.
8. Sometimes large, tall, new or beautiful buildings. City landscape - big/ beautiful.
9. Dramatis personae, e.g. Hermes as Trickster, Guide, Psychopomp. Magical. Films, film sets, fashion shows, TV, communication.
10. Imagery of mind active. Mythological imagery. Mirrors, moon.
11. Metal, mechanical instruments, fabricated objects.
12. More laughter, joy.
13. Flying, birds flying.
14. Appearance of number 4 or multiples of 4. This is the quaternity symbol.
15. Appearance of the number 3, symbolising the first appearance of the Transcendental dimension in three aspects.
16. Healing - hospitals, doctors.
17. Appearance of snake (whatever colour), instincts much quieter, tamer.
18. Travelling to Orient/going North. Appearance of oriental figures.
19. City/urban landscapes.

Template 3: The Loving self

1. Grace. Elegance.
2. Innocence. Babies/children.
3. Virgin-like. Unspoiled. Simplicity. Naturalness. Nakedness.
4. Light. Transparent. Moonlight.
5. Receptivity. Feminine. Heartfelt beauty.
6. Joy, enthusiasm.
7. Harmony.
8. Appearance of colours. Green.
9. Love, Lover.
10. Beauty, beauty of nature.
11. Gentleness.

Template 4: The Wise self (conflict between 2 sides)

Negative phase

DARK (conflict of opposites, distortions is apparent in the text)

1. devious, manipulating distortions - drugs, ugliness, vices
2. different sides in conflict - war - soldiers - killing
3. danger - violence - criminals
4. torture, suffering, poverty, despair
5. seduction - sexuality
6. accidents/crashes/fast cars/speed
7. police, authority
8. guns, knives, bullets, flying
9. anger, explosions, fire, cooking, thunder, lightning
10. law - justice/injustice
11. healing - hospitals - doctors, illness
12. desert landscapes
13. control/loss of control/wilful
14. flying [sublimatio operation]
15. Colours red/orange

Positive phase

LIGHT (transformation of conflict, negative attitude, negative situation, negative people)

1. celebrations - corn harvest/harvest time - rebirth
2. overcoming of opposition/resolving conflict
3. acceptance, ending resentment
4. truth, direct, open, free
5. crucifixion/resurrection, presence of spirit
6. power, helicopters - flight, symbol of a Δ , sun, lion, lioness
7. mastery, overcoming tests, sporting accomplishments
8. faith, self-belief
9. wisdom, compassion
10. quaternity symbol, number 4
11. mountains, savannah landscapes
12. Colours blue/green/gold/silver. Black and white
13. Surrender of personal will

Template 5 : The Sacred self

1. Palace court, grand buildings, sovereignty, magnificence, majesty, splendour.
2. Temples, churches, holy places. Pilgrimage. Going to Orient.
3. Treasure. Ore. Mining for ore.
4. Sacred, sacred rituals, prayer.
5. Landscapes of forests and much greenery, gardens, retreat, colour green.
6. Self-image.
7. Angels, cherubs, innocence, children.
8. Christ/Buddha/Mohammed/Dalai Lama images. Virgin Mary (sacred). Melchizedek (tall figure of light), Holy men/women. Priests/Priestesses. Guide figure.
9. Sword of light.
10. Concerts, singing, voice, communicating.
11. Peace.
12. Colours purple, green.
13. Peacock, peacock colours (gold/blue/green).
14. Quaternity symbol.
15. Second appearance of number 3 or 3 objects, 3 people, etc. Now the Transcendental in its three aspects is becoming more conscious.
16. Hermaphroditic/androgynous figure.
17. Secrets.

Template 6: The Pure self

1. Pale blue and white light. Self-luminous.
2. White birds, ascending.
3. Snow. Crystal. Immaculate, pure, clear.
4. Eternal.
5. Detached. Free. Indifferent.
6. Landscapes of snow, ice, snowy mountainous regions.

Template 7: Citrinitas (no self)

1. Disintegration of self, sense of dying.
2. Intense light (white), tunnel of light.
3. Black and white light/colours/clothing.
4. Gold, sun and silver, moon.
5. Many colours. Coloured dots.
6. Beings of light.
7. Sense of body as light. Expanding.
8. Sense of no body.
9. Transcendence. Timelessness. Ecstasy. Nothingness, emptiness. Bliss, great peace.
10. Regression - seeing ancestral lineage.
11. Symbol of fish.
12. Coniunctio. Marriage.
13. Ascending.
14. Seeing light above crown of head.

Template 8: Rubedo (return to the world)

1. Return to worldly life/work.
2. City landscapes, thoughts.
3. Personal issues return, instinctual forces return.
4. Coagulation - food.
5. Celebration/wine.
6. Gold; gold/silver.
7. Red. Red blood.
8. Quaternity symbol.
9. Re-birth.
10. Appearance of crone, mother earth figure.
11. Profusion of colours, profusion of treasures, riches, colourful foods, flowers.
12. Androgynous figures.

The number of criteria (themes) necessary for the recognition of a level of self

Most levels of self (L.O.S.) identified in the dream texts had two or more of the criteria specified for L.O.S. identification. Some retreats recorded as many as 13 criteria for the identification of the L.O.S. However, in looking at the themes identified in the texts, there are some exceptions, notably S.F. who spent 6.6% of her retreat time in what seemed like the Nigredo stage and yet she recorded no criteria for the Nigredo phase (instinctual self) and three criteria for the recognition of the Creative self. Together, she spent 13.3% of her retreat time (2 out of 15 days) in the Instinctual and Creative selves. This may be explained by the fact that S.F. was on the threshold of a profound psycho-spiritual transformation, i.e. her sense of self was not well-grounded in the Instinctual self - she settled quickly into a more subtle sense of self early in the retreat. By contrast P.W.(v) spent 33% of his retreat in the Nigredo

phase (Instinctual level of self) and recorded no less than 10 themes or criteria associated with the Instinctual self. He also recorded at least 7 criteria associated with the Creative self. Basically, half of his retreat (15 days out of 30) was spent on the Instinctual and Creative selves.

In one case, Si.L., no Loving self was identified, yet two 'Loving self' criteria were found amongst the 'Creative self'. This is explained by the overlapping of the different levels of self. It should also be noted that Si.L. and H. were two out of the 13 retreats in which the researcher as retreat guide recorded the dreams immediately after the retreatant described them. Some information can be lost in this 'second hand' recording of dreams, such as themes and the way they are emphasised.

In a few cases the level of self was identified by one criterion only; in other cases the level of self seemed to be strongly emphasised in the retreatant's process by having many criteria present. Hence it was not possible to specify the minimum number of criteria needed for the identification of a level of self.

It is noticeable that the 'Pure self' template has the smallest number of criteria (6) compared to say the Wise self (15 for the negative phase and 13 for the positive phase). This may be accounted for by the fact that since most retreatants accessed the Wise self, but very few experienced the relatively inaccessible and subtler Pure self, less data (themes) was available in the texts to describe the 'Pure self'.

Thus, the number of criteria specified for each level of self is to some extent dependent on the size of the psycho-spiritual transformation process survey sample. It may take hundreds of samples, conducted by many investigators, to establish a more complete and universally accepted set of criteria for each level of self, or phase of the transformation process.

5.1.2 Detailed, in-depth descriptions of the levels of self as experienced through the dreams

A 'thick' description of each level of self using the template themes

Introduction

Having extracted the themes that typified the unfolding transformation process and created templates for each level of self, it was now possible to attempt a more synthesised description of each level of self.

A thick description (Braud & Anderson, 1998) is a detailed, in-depth description of an experience in which all aspects, including the researcher's experience of the phenomena, are put together. Having read the thick description, the reader is then more able to picture, sense and understand the phenomena being described. In this case, the dream themes of each level of self, as well as the researcher's experience of each level, are gathered together to create a detailed description of each level of self.

The Instinctual self

The instinctual self is encountered at the outset of the process, the Nigredo phase of the retreat. The experience of this level of self depends upon the extent of the influence of the instincts upon the retreatant. Two retreatants, S.F. and S.L., scarcely touched upon this level, both in their dreams and in the length of time spent in this level. Significantly, both these retreatants spent considerably longer periods in the other three phases of the retreat, Albedo, Citrinitas and Rubedo. They also recorded far more themes from the templates for each subtle level of self than for the level of the instinctual self. However, most retreatants experienced this level as having a more significant impact than the above two exceptions.

The instinctual self of the Nigredo phase is also experienced as a time of darkness, boredom, frustration and resistance to the retreat by the body, mind and emotions. It is a period of confusion, during which the retreatant is challenged to re-orientate his/her consciousness, or focus of attention, and turn away from the concerns for and

attachments to the outside world, to their personal inner experience of themselves, i.e. they experience frustration with the restrictions of the retreat space, retreat diet, and the banality of having only one or two spiritual practices to focus on relentlessly for hours on end, each day. Psychologically speaking, it is experienced as a dark, empty period, and sometimes quite depressing. This is reflected in the retreat dreams. Themes of darkness, dark shadowy figures, feeling lost, sad and despairing all appear. The emptiness is referred to in Sufism as the *Bazarkh* or interval between the material world of consciousness and the inner world of the soul. It is experienced when we turn within, away from the world. Once we have transited the *Bazarkh* we begin the ascent of consciousness (Harris, 1981), and the Albedo stage begins.

The instincts react defensively as though the instinctual self is struggling to survive as an independent entity. In Sufism this reaction is described as the activating of the instinctual *nafs* or 'appetites' (Shaffii, 1985). In Buddhism this is described as our attachments to worldly pleasures (Varela, 1997). Freud (Jacobs, 1992) would regard this as a denying of the libido to the instinctual forces by the superego.

Consequently, anger, frustration, greed, hunger, rage and sexual seduction all appear as themes in the dreams and are often experienced consciously by the retreatant as a result. At this stage of the process there is a breaking down of the sense of self, particularly the instinctual self and so it is not surprising that behavioural themes such as being controlling and being out of control, destruction and danger, chaos and disorder, mess and sickness of the body all appear in the dreams.

Other themes such as worldly concerns for money, food, sex, status and power also come up in the dreams at this stage, again reflecting the values and concerns of this 'instinctual self'. It would seem that this is an attempt to re-assert the instinctual influences by either participating and identifying with such worldly things, or if not they are asserted by envying, valuing or being jealous of characters in the dreams who seem to have this power, money, status, and sexual attractiveness.

The mind at this stage reacts by producing obsessive thoughts, again around worldly matters, objects and concerns. Sometimes, at this stage, the theme of proliferation of insects/rats appears in the dreams. This may be connected to the obsessive nature of the mind when its usual way of thinking and perceiving is challenged.

The theme of the false self often appears, perhaps because there is an 'inner knowing' that this way of being is a way of covering up inner rage, fear, envy and jealousy. It is however not the only way of being and that in order to experience other ways of being, or other levels of self, then its status and dominion must be surrendered. The challenge of this stage of the retreat is to survive the encounter and to begin to master or contain these instinctual forces. Unless the retreatant can contain and to a large extent master these inner forces they do not complete the Nigredo stage.

The Creative self

Once the Instinctual self has been encountered and sufficiently 'mastered', the Nigredo stage is completed and a new stage of ascending consciousness begins, called Albedo. Now the Creative self emerges in the retreatant's consciousness. The appearance of the level of the Creative self is characterised by several features. However, the most important is a change from the grosser features of the Instinctual self dreams to 'lighter' features that show a greater clarity, as well as a more positive outlook in the dreams. This is reflected in the dream images, dream characters and in the appearance of colours/light. Themes from the Instinctual self begin to disappear and in their place very different themes emerge. Some, but not all, of the themes described below need to be present.

The instinctual, earthy dreams become more imaginative and creative, using metaphors like films, tv, fashion shows, highlighting the creative aspect of the mind. The metaphors relate directly to the life of the dreamer and to the intrapsychic forces within, such as balancing of masculine and feminine attitudes in the mind. In addition, most metaphors used at this level are all of the fabricated kind, i.e. manufactured, created or artificial objects as opposed to organic (or artificial vs. natural).

Talents, hobbies, interests are shown in the dreams, as a means of beginning to connect to a deeper aspect of themselves beyond the mundane conflicts and problems of their current life - connecting perhaps to things more meaningful that they are naturally interested in or have a talent for.

In looking at other features, an inner wisdom of guidance seems to speak or show itself through dramatic personae, magical figures - these help to resolve the inner conflicts, life scripts and negative perceptions of the retreatant's mind.

An example from a long retreat is shown in Dream Data sheet 5.3

Dream Data sheet 5.3: P.W.(vi), Day 6, Dream 2

"A friend, A., is captain of a cricket team. He asks me to captain jointly. We go off by car. On arrival A. enters the desert tent and comes out dressed in the most exquisite Afghan clothes - a grey black skirt and a long beautiful green scarf about his shoulders and reaching to his knees. Great richness about his clothes - they must have cost a fortune - ? drug money ? He is going to a wedding. He is dressed as a woman."

This dream shows P.W.'s interest in one of his hobbies, cricket. He is elevated to joint captain of the team. His friend, A., re-appears richly dressed in colourful clothes and he is going to a wedding dressed as a woman. An interpretation of this dream could focus on his friend as the guide figure, i.e. A. first befriending, then elevating P.W.'s status to that of captain of the team and then showing a colourful richness through clothes that P.W. is missing in his psyche, i.e. a more colourful, feminine aspect. Finally, A. goes to a wedding suggesting a conjoining operation of the masculine and feminine aspects in the Creative self will occur shortly. However, the themes of sporting interests, and of colours appearing, the inner richness or treasure (wealth) and the interplay of the inner masculine and feminine traits seem to be typical features that are common to many of the retreatants' dreams at this level of the self, and at this stage of the retreat. Thus they can be considered as archetypal features.

Work situations and preoccupations come in at this level, in a similar way to talents and interests. However, they relate more to what the retreatant has identified with, i.e. how their professional life has impacted their sense of self. Personal attitudes and conflicts at work are all shown through the metaphor of work related themes. His comment on 'drug money' reflects the dreamer's own suspicions, being projected onto the 'friend'.

Beautiful architecture, art, room décor, furniture also feature in the creative self. Whilst these are fabricated images, they do begin to help the retreatant connect to something beautiful in themselves. Ib'n Arabi (Corbin, 1981) emphasises that in a psycho-spiritual transformation, the Divine, or transcendental, spiritual aspect first appears through our imagination as beauty. 'Beauty therefore conveys to us our first encounter with a knowledge of the Divine' (paraphrased). Perhaps at the level of the imaginative creative mind, we apprehend the Divine through beauty. Perhaps all cultures in the world use art and music and the beauty of the spoken or written word to convey this. However, architecture is not always shown as beautiful at this level, buildings are sometimes described as tall or big, i.e. impressive rather than beautiful.

Creativity often appears at this level, with the retreatant getting new ideas, visions of new possibilities, new ways of seeing their life. This seems to allow for a break from the stale old, usual way of perceiving themselves and their lives and to see more creatively and with more insight. Along with these changes come the expressions or experiences in the dreams of joy and laughter, as a way of reconnecting with a more creative side of themselves as well as being excited at the prospect of something new emerging.

Celebrations (festivals) and healing activities (hospitals, doctors) are regular themes of the creative self. They seem to signify a ritual celebration of change and of being healed psychically.

Flying is also a regular theme, indicating a kind of transcendence of their 'imprisoning inner world' towards something more subtle in themselves. Hence the metaphor of helicopters and aircraft.

The number 4 regularly appears, signifying the completion or establishment of this level - the creative, imaginative mind, as opposed to the worldly, practical, 'preoccupied with life-problems' mind. Jung interprets the appearance of the number 4 as a significant step towards individuation (Jung, 1968), or the development of the Self.

The number 3 also appears, signifying the transcendental appearing consciously in three aspects (von Franz, 1974).

A dramatic example taken from a short retreat shows the transformation from the Instinctual self to the Creative self taking place as follows in Dream Data sheet 5.4:

Dream Data Sheet 5.4: M.H.(ii), Day 3

"I was transforming into a mutant. I had chicken legs coming out of my ears and 3 little legs on each shoulder and 3 on the breast.

I was at my mother's house with one of my sisters. I looked in the mirror and I was horrified. I took the chicken legs coming out of my ears off and blood started running just a bit. I thought no-one would know or notice, but then there was a lot more blood. My sister was talking to me about money I owed her, and I said I had it and was going to get it and then I washed my ears again.

I talked later to my sister, I was very embarrassed because I had chicken legs growing all over me. I even showed her and she said "It is like prehistoric, you better be seen." My mother was cooking dinner when in the oven a whole animal developed, like something not quite from this planet. My sister looked at me and said "What is happening in this house?" My mother had taken something out of the first oven and the animal was still alive. So my sister said I had better do something before mum sees that. But my mother turned round while my sister was putting a big stick in the head of the animal. Everyone became hysterical, my mum saw the animal and started to shout, my son too. The animal died and then transformed into a fox and was talking. He said "How can I live without a body?" and the voice was like a baby's voice. Everyone felt compassion for it and my sister said "I know you are already a mutant," and she looked at me, took an arrow and aimed it at me. I got really scared and jumped out on the balcony and climbed down. The arrow missed me. The animal was already down the two floors waiting for me. I ran but the voice got me again and I jumped in a hole and said to him "Come on then," knowing the animal would come inside me and transform me."

This dream shows the transformation of the instinctual nature symbolised by the chicken turning into a fox. More significantly, this mutation is personalised, as M.H. experiences both the chicken and the fox as being with or being taken within herself.

Further, she is the subject of the transformation, which involves cooking and being killed. The number 3 appears as 3 chicken legs coming out of each shoulder and 3 legs on her breast.

The next day, day 4, M.H. had a creative inspiration for a workshop (see dream appendix V). This shows the emerging of the creative qualities, which are more prominent at this level of self.

The Loving self

Entry to the Loving self was always preceded by a completion of the Creative self transit, i.e. a sign of completion like a celebration. The chief characteristics of the Loving self are a child-like innocence, the appearance of natural beauty which is simple and unspoiled (virgin-like), and harmony (often indicated by an expression of love and of receptivity). The Loving self is also boundaried by what follows, which usually is a quick transition to the negative phase of the Wise self through experiences such as violence, anger, conflict, aggression, or distortions, such as ugliness, or an unease in their feelings. Most experiences of this Loving self level are fleeting in comparison to what precedes it (Creative self) and what follows (Wise self).

The theme of beauty is seen in the form of nature, of people (its image is typically feminine). Other themes can be graciousness or elegance. Babies and children or baby animals typify the sense of innocence. Nakedness, a lack of clothing or transparency of clothing serves to emphasise the simplicity of the image in the dream. Reflective light and moonlight (not direct sunlight) are often accompanying images, further emphasising the receptive, feminine aspect. Finally, joy, smiling, enthusiasm are themes that reflect the mood of this level. It has a heavenly visage to it. If there are landscapes, they are natural, simple and beautiful. Again, colours often appear which are soft and harmonious.

Examples of the brief appearance of the Loving self in the dreams follow in Dream Data Sheet 5.5. Phrases that contain the themes of the Loving self have been lifted from the dreams and placed together for brevity.

Dream Data Sheet 5.5

R.J.(ii), Day 5

"A very beautiful rose garden in full bloom. Sister in a transparent dress. I'm in a transparent dress."

A.L. Day after completion of the retreat

"Love, lover, and beloved are united. In neighbourhood beautiful wood. A most beautiful tiger. Tiger's kitten jumps out to play. Forest floor covered with blue flowers. Savannah grasses. Beech wood is now spring green. Turns dark pink. Breathtakingly beautiful and wonderful."

H. Days 7 & 8

"A very beautiful garden in India with statues and plants. A very loving beautiful lady and a very kind gentle loving lady."

J.(i). Days 16 & 17

"A row of young girls were waiting to do a fashion show by undressing. A yellowish shimmering image of a little bird just breaking out of its eggshell. A natural sense of innocence. Old-fashioned, oriental-looking living room, guests mostly young girls/women dressed like the room, room has beautiful oriental rugs."

P.W. (i). Day 15, Dream 6

"Standing outside a girl's school. A girl is standing near me, she is about 12 years old and has grace and beauty, simplicity and naturalness that girls have at that age."

P.W. (ii). Day 12, Dream 2

"Young teenage girls. I find them so attractive - their bodies, their movements, their nakedness, their laughter. Totally without awareness. Virgin nature in all its beauty. The beauty of these girls."

P.W. (iii). Day 15, Dream 2

"Shah of Persia is being married together (he and his bride). They dance - like a ballet. It's heartfelt, moving, beautiful, yet simple."

The last three examples represent a progression of the Loving self during three successive retreats over three years for P.W.

The Wise self

Conflict is the most significant theme of this level. It reveals deep inner struggles in the psyche, typically between dark and light. Modern myths that illustrate this are the films 'Star Wars' and 'Lord of the Rings'.

Initially the retreatant experiences negative emotions and a tiredness, as though the retreat has taken a 'dip'. This is clearly shown in the dreams and marked as the negative stage of the Wise self. It is followed by a rise in mood and energy. Again, this is reflected in the dreams and marked as the positive phase of the Wise self. The themes are shown in the Wise self templates.

In many cases, the Wise self began with conflict or a war between two sides, often involving destructive weapons. Distortions in the personality were also often shown - crookedness of nature, fear of power, wilfulness, anger, rage, deviousness, manipulating characters, drugs, alcohol, vices and ugliness, as well as danger, violence, criminals and crime - all appeared at this level.

Other themes featured were torture, suffering, poverty, despair, seduction, sexual promiscuousness, accidents and speeding! It seems to be a veritable litany of hell.

Justice, injustice, the law, conscience and guilt were also involved as themes in the Wise self. Again, this seemed to act as a metaphor for unresolved conflicts in the psyche.

The image of crucifixion and resurrection appeared in a few retreats, but again this seems to echo and emphasise the theme of suffering, struggle and transformation.

If these issues are acknowledged and resolved, at least to some degree, then the nature and character of the dreams and their themes becomes positive. The level of the Wise self seems to challenge the retreatant to manifest qualities such as justice, wisdom, compassion, forgiveness, openness, directness, truthfulness, faith, power and to be able to surrender their personal will to a greater will (the Divine) (Assagioli, 1971). The latter could also be seen from a psychological point of view as letting go of control - not always having to be in control.

Healing, hospitals, doctors, nurses usually appear after a conflict or something fearful has emerged, suggesting that an aspect of the psyche is being healed.

Sporting accomplishments also featured regularly in the dream texts at this level. Again, sports images seem to act as metaphors for the struggle to successfully overcome their personal limitations.

Many landscapes appeared in the dreams at this level as hot, dry and desert-like, coinciding with the idea that an 'inner fire' is awakening and emerging. Other landscapes were huge valleys, crevasses, ravines, gorges, chasms - again suggesting something of the huge split or divide in the psyche between light and dark.

Colours that appeared in the dreams were typically red, red-orange, orange at first, which later give way to green, gold and silver. Possibly this is why alchemists seemed to see such significance in the symbolism of gold and silver, sun and moon, as metaphors for two basically different aspects of our psyche, e.g. male and female, light and dark, soul and spirit.

Finally, themes such as anger, explosions, fire, cooking often appeared, all of which seemed to suggest the awakening of a fiery nature in the transformation process. Alchemically speaking, the element fire is seen as the most radical purifier needed in the transformation process. In alchemy it is recognised as a purification by fire or *calcinatio* (Edinger, 1991). However, if this is seen simply as incorporating a more intense, high energy potential or 'higher energy state', 'a stepping up of voltage and power' that is needed in the ascent of the levels of self, then this could explain the imagery found in the Wise self dreams. Retreatants often reported physical burning sensations in the solar plexus and heart centre (middle of breast) when transiting this level. The burning is not physical, but on a psychic level (S.F. Day 5, P.W.(iii), Day 6 in dream appendix V).

The level of the Wise self therefore seems to be located not only at the 'middle of the psyche', midway between the instinctive and Creative and Loving self on the one side and the Sacred, Pure and transcendent levels on the other side. In some cases, it was experienced in the middle of the transformation process. The negative phase of the Wise self was also experienced as being similar to the dark period of Nigredo (Instinctual self), with the difference that now conflict and danger were more prominent and intense than in the Nigredo stage. The Archetypes now seemed to be

coming from a much deeper level than in Nigredo. Again, as in the Nigredo stage, it was as though another interval or 'Bazarkh' had to be crossed before the process and progress to the higher levels of self could continue.

Two very different examples of this level follow in Dream Data sheets 5.6 and 5.7:

Dream Data Sheet 5.6: R.J. (ii)

<u>Day 7</u> Dream 3am	<p>A series of dream fragments.</p> <p><i>At work - nothing in my diary for a whole week. I try to speak to my boss before she leaves work, to ask what she wants me to do, but she is engaged and I don't get to speak to her before she goes home.</i></p> <p><i>A tennis match between two people - one of whom, I think, has impersonated the other. The one who has impersonated the other is a pale reflection of the girl who wins.</i></p> <p><i>I ask P. is he is going to the resort of Split. Three others seem to know the answer already. I stop to buy vegetables from a shop which is closing. He says 'don't bother - you know you'll only spend half your wages.'</i></p>
<u>Day 7</u> Dream 3am continued	<p><i>A special football 'trophy' scarf has been discovered being worn by Reading Football Club to whom it does not belong. It belongs to my club.</i></p> <p><i>P. and D. are playing a game which involves singing. P. has found a loudspeaker to make the game more embarrassing and, in his eyes, more interesting. I'm not at all interested.</i></p> <p><i>I'm sort of going out with a new boyfriend, T. he seems kind and well meaning but I'm not very interested.</i></p>
<u>Day 8</u> Dream 2am	<p><i>In a vast, vaulted loft space. Someone is saying 'there's such a lot of space to be filled.'</i></p>
Dream 2am	<p><i>In the garden of my childhood home. All the lights in the house go out and the garden is plunged into darkness. I call across to the little chicken house to make sure the children are alright. They call back that they're fine. When I go to look, they are. They have made bunk beds and the three of them, L., G. and their cousin B., plus one other, are tucked up in bed. They are happy, excited in a way and cosy. The roof is open to the stars.</i></p>

Dream Data Sheet 5.6: R.J. (ii) continued

- Dream 2am *I've been on a diet, including a long period of fasting. I think it has been for a hundred days. I'm working as a waitress in a very old and beautiful building and I'm serving a celebratory meal to lots of guests. I'm very aware not to eat too much too quickly, especially rich food and I wait until all the guests have gone before I sit down and taste with huge delight, a sword fish nut which is a bit like an avocado only the flesh is salty and white. It is exquisite. I eat a tiny piece with a slice of tomato and I call to P. to try some. He says he is too busy.*
- Dream 2am *In a restaurant which seems to have been divided in two. Half is for serious diners and half is for people who want tea and quick food. I'm in the quick food section - the tension is unbearable. There seem to be two groups of people, one male, the other female. There is awful antagonism and hostility. One woman in particular, Pat (I think of P.'s sister T.), is being very inflammatory and stirring things up, although she's pretending she isn't. I think there's going to be an explosion - the restaurant owner is asking us to consider the other diners. Finally both groups leave and I move with relief to another seat to look out of the window. Reflected in the glass is myself and another character, quietly sitting right next to me. He has appeared from nowhere. He is wearing a silver costume and a shaggy, silver wig. He looks wild and a bit mad but not at all frightening.*
- Dream 5.30am *We've been on such a long journey, back to 'source'? It's still not over. We've been through cavern after cavern, it has all been underground. The way seems to be a little easier now.*
- Dream 5.30am *We're on a journey, the children and I. They seem to have all they need now. I stop, with another woman, to buy a few final things in a general store. Whilst we're in the shop we hear a violent argument going on in the room at the back of the shop. A man is abusing his wife diabolically. I shout 'Stop that in there. We can hear everything.' At this, a battered, tired woman emerges and says that she is coming with us. She says that now she has been heard she can leave. We continue the journey together.*
- Dream 5.30am *I'm searching on top of a wardrobe for something and I find to my amazement lots of food including fresh fruit which is still very fresh. The children say, 'Bring it down, we can have it for dessert.'*
- Day 9
Dream 3am *I've just been told that the course will continue on The Art of Living or The Joy of Living? I look back and see my bed and myself bathed in white light.*
- Midday *During the practice of Ya Qaher - Ya Wali - overwhelmed with tiredness and had to lie down - very powerful image of a long, straight road, lined with trees. Fresh snow had fallen - everything was completely white, absolutely spotless and untouched. The sun was shining from a point at the end of the road; the effect on the snow was blinding, so much as that when I opened my eyes eventually I wasn't sure I would be able to see.*

This series of dreams shows many of the Wise self themes. There is a split or division between two conflicting sides. The dreams start using sport as a vehicle for the split (the tennis match). A celebration follows. Then the conflict manifests through the restaurant. Later a man abuses his wife. This completes the negative phase of the Wise self. The positive phase begins with the dream of fresh fruit and proceeds on Day 9 with the dream of the 'Art of Living'. By Day 9 it seems as though the conflict is over.

Dream Data Sheet 5.7: H.

Day 10

"Dreamt of a building site. Men are not working very hard on it yet, but one worker is doing body-building after the day's work. A very physical chap. Then I saw disfigured chickens, some bald and similar looking old ladies who were popping LSD pills and wanting me to go with them to a club. I woke up disenchanted."

Day 11

"I saw a young Swedish couple with a baby. I thought they were drifters but in fact they were impoverished. So I helped them. Next I am in Sweden, where I first went into exile from my homeland, and I meet the couple and arrange housing benefit. They return and the new four bedroom house is for me! Then I am with my father and I see excrement and faeces dropped around the toilet floor. I clean it up."

Day 12, Dream 1

"I saw a cat (my girlfriend's cat) on fire and suffering. I jumped up to spare the cat of its suffering by eating it. Then I pulled out the remains from my mouth. Yet I still felt it was blocking my throat."

Dream 2

"Then I dreamt of Syria. I saw the market town with all the merchandise. Two men came out of their cabs and started fighting. Others look devious and manipulative in their selling. I felt disgusted by this."

Day 13, Dream 1

"I dreamt my father was dying in hospital. He phoned me. I then saw him curled up like a small foetus in bed. Blood was on his mouth. I bent over and buried him and then I felt sad."

Dream Data Sheet 5.7: H. continued

Day 13, Dream 2

"I dreamt I was in the Middle East with young men and women around 20 years old. The colours were very bright and a sense of freshness and vigour in the scenery."

H. enters the negative phase of the Wise Self on Day 10. Many of the distortions listed in the Wise self template are listed. On Day 11 he goes north to Sweden where in fact he was first in exile from his homeland. However, he acquires a four bedroom house. He also is shown his father and the toilet mess around him. He cleans it up. Again the Wise self themes are apparent - the couple start out impoverished but find a home. It is a four bedroomed house. Purification around his father is necessary. On Day 12 fire and suffering are the themes. In the second dream Wise self themes of conflict, deviousness and manipulation are apparent. Following the death of his father on Day 13 in dream 1, the positive phase of the Wise self starts. (Perhaps this is the death of the old ruling, mental principle of his psyche.) H. is back with young people again. The scenery is colourful and the atmosphere fresh.

The Sacred self

In the Sacred self there is an increasing sensitivity to the sacred, the religious and to the angelic aspects of ourselves.

This religious theme of sacredness is expressed through images of religious activities, the church, prayers, temples, holy men and women and of course through an intangible, subtle sense of the angelic worlds.

The temples are often grand buildings, cathedrals or if the religious aspect is not so emphasised, then the buildings are palatial, grand and majestic. In several dream texts, a sense of splendour, magnificence and grandeur came through at this level. Perhaps these are our ways of apprehending our Divinity, or the God-like aspect that has been invested in us. It seems to be the opposite of that experienced in *nigredo*, or during the negative half of the Wise self. The British royal family is often invoked here as a metaphor for this 'inner splendour'. Psychologically speaking, this would be

seen as a projection. However, this dream phenomenon became a little more genuinely cross-cultural when retreatants from countries outside of the U.K. dreamt of examples such as a Chinese emperor and a Danish Prince during their transiting of the Sacred self!

Along with the sense of sacredness and majesty comes the theme of peacefulness - a complete absence of conflict. The kind of peacefulness found on retreat, in the great forests of nature. This is in contrast to the intense conflict and inner struggle evident in the Wise self.

Another theme of the Sacred self is treasure, ore, mining for ore. Here one is reminded of the famous phrase from the texts of the Hadith in Islam 'I was a hidden Treasure, longing to be known' (Corbin, 1981), implying that Divinity is a hidden treasure in all of us longing to be experienced consciously. This speaks of Maslow's higher potential in our psyches (Maslow, 1971). Perhaps this is the treasure we are unconsciously apprehending. This treasure contrasts with our self-image, which is mostly limited and vulnerable.

The treasure seems to 'outshine' this self-image, often initially creating the sense of unworthiness and yet when consciously acknowledged it banishes such negativity completely.

The landscapes mainly seem to be beautiful gardens or vast areas of greenery - here one is reminded of the religious symbol of the 'inner garden of the heart', a 'sacred treasure'. Occasionally, the landscapes are of sacred mountains, great forests of greenery. One example is S.F. Day 6 (shown below). Young children are usually present, emphasising the innocent aspect at this level. Many images of children from the texts showed wounding, deprivation and unhappiness, but once the pain of this had been consciously accessed a healing or reparation became possible, as though a lost sense of innocence was being recovered.

Finally, there is the theme of concerts, singing, images of the voice being used in a dream to express an inner (soul-like) feeling. There is a seeming absence of consciousness of the instinctual at this level or, if this is present, it is very tame.

Other themes which appeared in the texts were communication and secrets or knowledge that is 'a secret'.

A good example of the level of the sacred self follows in Dream Data Sheet 5.8:

Dream Data Sheet 5.8: S.F., Day 6

"I saw the Virgin Mary and felt her pure, sweet and healing energy. I stayed there for a long time and then saw a very tall figure of light with a big sword of light (pointing downwards) behind her. I knew that this was Melchizedek and I was very much in awe.

As I eventually turned away I saw Murshid with a very gentle, loving presence. I felt very held by that.

He led me to a kind of court, a place of splendour with orange and gold that later became purple and green colours. It was Ib'n Arabi's place and I was allowed to sit there for a while. There was music and story-telling and there was an atmosphere of celebration, generosity and spiritual wealth.

My attention was drawn to a darker place, where I saw a monk, holding a wounded person. He held a lamp in one hand and had a light in his heart. He told me that the way to heal is to bring light into darkness and to kindle the light in my heart.

He led me up many, many steps into brilliance and light and a landscape of nature, greenery and Greek temples. He showed me plants with which to heal people. I felt great love and felt very loved. Murshid was still with me. Looking through the temples I got a glimpse and taste of the heavenly music of Bach. I heard very loudly in my head one of my favourite pieces ("Jesus, Joy of Man's Desire"). I saw the magnificence and strength of that energy resulting from dedication and mastery through hard work.

I started to hear the sound of church bells quite loud.

Immediately I saw a green plant pushing through cracks in the pavement. This was followed by a sensation of giving birth.

I was in a jungle. It was very luscious green and full of life. There were plants and big green still rivers. The place felt very safe and peaceful. There were animals too, deer in the forest, birds in the air. A white serpent came to walk with me on my left side. He was very loving and talked to me and suckled milk from my breasts. It followed me everywhere. On my right side I had a big lion as a companion. He licked my hand and when I sat down he put his head into my lap and let me stroke him. The green streams started to flow more and more.

Dream Data Sheet 5.8: S.F., Day 6 continued

"I prayed again: 'Show me the work I have to do.'"

"A perfectly still silver lake appeared in the middle of the jungle reflecting everything in it. Then I saw the edge of the forest. There was just whiteness beyond it. Searchlights like from a helicopter appeared from there. Me and my two animal friends set out to go there."

"I found myself in a sacred space, a cave, that was illuminated with many candles in an orange red light. Some stone steps led to a pool of clear warm water to bathe in. a friend was with me and we both bathed. I knew that this cave was my sacrum."

The Pure self

Four of the retreats showed several clear images of the Pure self. Since this seems to be a very subtle level of self it is not surprising that three out of these four retreats were ranked in the 'top' group of retreats (see Quantitative Analysis, Table 5.1). Two retreatants each had one Pure self theme in their dreams during the level of the Pure self.

Examples of images in the Pure self are shown in Dream Data Sheet 5.9:

Dream Data Sheet 5.9

The landscape of the pure self is often at high altitude and snow-covered. The images are of an immaculate, pure white landscape.

"A pure immaculate stream, descending, unsullied, from a height and pitch that is beyond all imagination. Unwavering, eternal, self-luminous, fully satisfying."

Other descriptions: *"At sunrise camp. We have four options. (1) Make a direct ascent of mountain - the guide says the trouble is in first portion (of journey) - it's difficult there but easier after. He shows me a picture of the Eiger (peak). I remember these mountains - the first bit is very steep."*

Crystalline light and Crystals also appear as pure self images.

"The sounds are high, clear and brilliant, like crystal glass pendants jostling each other."

Dream Data Sheet 5.9 continued

Other images of white birds, flying: *"White doves flying in a pale sky towards the white light of the sun."*

"I am in snow-covered mountains and I can hear the Allegri 'Miserere', there is a swan getting out of the icy lake, it breaks through the ice and comes out onto land in front of a snow-covered forest, it shakes its wings, preparing to fly. There are other swans on the lake, I am a bride in a white robe and a voice says "Your veil is a waterfall of light."

Other themes emphasise a sense of detachment, freedom, indifference and eternity.

"Throughout the dream I feel very light and a detached observer."

The Pure self is followed either by the stage of Citrinitas, and then Rubedo or there is a direct transition from the Pure self to the Rubedo stage. No thick description of Citrinitas was attempted since it is described as transcendent, the level of 'no self'. Secondly, only two retreatants, S.F. and S.L., had clear experiences of this level of consciousness, one description being brief and the other detailed. A third retreatant, S., transited this level but, although the texts showed a disintegrating sense of self, it was still mixed in with his personality. Rubedo simply involves a return to the world and a re-integration of all the previous levels of self.

Observation from the retreat dream study

Some retreatants did not access all six levels of self. In such cases, only two stages of the process, Nigredo and Albedo, were present. Typically they accessed the Instinctual self and the Creative self or the Instinctual self, Loving self and Wise self only, before ending their retreat. This occurred mostly in the short retreats. Exceptions were S.F., S.L. and N.L.(i).

5.1.3 Overlaps between the subtle levels of self and between the different stages of the retreat

One of the features of the thematic analysis was that of the overlap of the different levels of self. In reading the dream texts, overlaps were clearly observable between

each level of self. Overlaps also occurred between the different stages of the retreat transformation. The same phenomenon can be seen again in the quantitative analysis, graphs 1-19.

On reviewing the dream texts the clearest delineation of the levels of self was between the Loving self and the Wise self. This seems to be because of the opposite natures of the two levels, e.g. the Loving self is innocent and gentle, whilst the Wise self appears to be more challenging, conflictual and intense.

However, for the other levels of self, the overlapping was noticeable through the colour metaphors in the overlapping of the themes between the adjacent levels of self. This resulted in a blurring of the distinction between the levels of self, and as a consequence there was a confusion as to which was which. As the retreat proceeded, the overlapping disappeared and the contrast between the two adjacent levels of self became more obvious. For instance, in looking at P.W. (v), the -ve wise self begins on Day 17 with the appearance of 'Red ink'. The +ve wise self starts on Day 22. However, on the night of Day 22, dream 2, the theme of treasure appears (a Sacred self theme). The wise self ends on Day 22. The Sacred self starts clearly on Day 23.

The overlapping also occurred between the different stages of the retreat. For example, the overlap between the Instinctual self and the Creative self caused a blurring of the distinction between the Nigredo and Albedo stages. However, one distinguishing feature of the Creative self, flying, very often marks the beginning or hints at the beginning of the Albedo stage.

The example of P.W. (v) follows in Dream Data Sheet 5.10:

Dream Data Sheet 5.10: P.W. (v)

1. <u>Nigredo Stage</u>	Days one through four clearly show the Nigredo stage and what is called the level of the Instinctual self. However, between Day 5 and Day 8 the situation is not so clear. Some of the Creative self themes are present, such as:
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Dream Data Sheet 5.10: P.W. (v) continued

2. Mixed Stage *sporting interests* (Day 5, dream 1)
 bowling green (Day 5, dream 2)
 a sense of inner treasure (Day 6, dream 1)
 imagery showing P.W.'s work life (Day 6, dream 1)
 an illuminated holiday city (Day 7)

and yet on

Day 7 - *a sense of happy resolution in Africa* (Nigredo, instinctual) and *daylight* - dream 1, the instinctual forces are present - albeit in a magical, creative way (creative - Albedo). (They perform superhuman (magical) and human-like tasks - instinctual, Nigredo.)

On Days 7 and 8 the Instinctual and Creative self themes appear mixed together.

Followed by:

{ Day 8, dream 2 - 2 kittens survive (Nigredo, instinctual)
 { Day 8 (after 3am) - *dream of a city landscape* (creative, Albedo) and
 { *his clothes being soiled in a hotel* and the quaternity symbol
 appears in this dream as well

3. Albedo Day 9 sees the clear signs of the Albedo stage and appearance of the
 Stage Creative self:

- whitening of a room
- *Institute for Mountain Butterflies* - for the comets and such-like (symbols of flight and transformation).

Leaving the thematic analysis for a moment and looking in section 5.2.2 at the presence of light in graph 16, showing P.W.(v)'s retreat (quantitative analysis), we see that the colour/light in the graph shows the first 'spike' as between days 1 and 3. This corresponds to the Nigredo stage shown above.

The second 'spike' or curve appears between days 4 and 10. This corresponds roughly with the mixed or transition stage as shown above.

The third 'spike', the 'Creative self', is shown on the graph as being between days 11 and 14. The corresponding thematic analysis shows the Creative self as starting at day 9 and finishing on day 15.

Thus, it would seem to suggest that in some cases, especially for the longer retreats, or when the transition between the Nigredo and Albedo stages is protracted, an intermediate 'transition' stage, which could be seen as a mixture of the Nigredo and Albedo stages, exists.

Similarly, there is an overlap between the Albedo and Citrinitas stages. This occurs between the Sacred self and the Pure self (Albedo stage) and the Citrinitas stage. See P.W. (v), Day 26 (Sacred self). However, during Dream 6, Day 26, the theme of descent also appears, indicating the Rubedo stage.

On Day 27, there is a coniunctio image in Dream 1, followed by a 'return to the world of mind' - New York. Clearly Citrinitas and Rubedo can also overlap each other.

Conclusion

There are overlaps which occur between the stages of the process and between the levels of self during the retreat process. Overlapping of the levels of self is likely to occur during long retreats when the retreatant spends some time in one subtle level of self and it takes a while to make the transition to the next level of self.

Overlapping can also occur when the transition from one Alchemical stage to another is a protracted one and as a result a mixed stage appears between the two.

5.1.4 Psychological issues on Retreat

The personal thoughts, ideas and blocked feelings experienced in the retreat regularly emerge through the dream metaphors. These relate to psychological issues that emerge from the retreatant's unconscious psyche during the retreat. The psychological issues are in turn blocks to the emergence of the archetypal themes underlying the level of self the retreatant is struggling to enter into or become conscious of. Two examples follow in Dream Data sheets 5.11 and 5.12.

Dream Data Sheet 5.11: R.J. (ii)

Day 8, 5.30am, Dream 1, -ve phase of the level of the 'Wise self'

"We've been on such a long journey, back to 'source'? ... It is still not over. We've been through cavern after cavern, it has all been underground. They way seems a little easier now."

Day 8, 5.30am, Dream 2

"We're on a journey, the children and I. They seem to have all they need now. I stop, with another woman, to buy a few final things in a general store. Whilst we're in the shop we hear a violent argument going in the room at the back of the shop. A man is abusing his wife diabolically. I shout 'Stop that in there. We can hear everything.' At this, a battered, tired woman emerges and says that she is coming with us. She says that now she has been heard she can leave. We continue the journey together."

Day 8, 5.30am, Dream 3, +ve phase of the Wise self

"I'm searching on top of a wardrobe for something and I find to my amazement lots of food including fresh fruit which is still very fresh. The children say, 'Bring it down, we can have it for dessert.'"

Day 9, 3am

"I've just been told that the course will continue on 'The Art of Living' or the 'Joy of Living'? I look back and see my bed and myself bathed in white light."

This was followed by a very positive sunny dream, marked as the resolution of the psychological conflict between two sides in her.

Clearly, R.J. struggles with her self as a victim (the battered woman), and struggles consciously to end the unconscious identification with that role in herself, and in her life. This leads to a psycho-spiritual shift in the process from being in the negative phase of the 'Wise self' to the positive (+ve) phase of the Wise self. The retreat proved to be a major turning point for her and her life as she was able to secure a good professional job after a long period of menial, exhausting jobs she had taken in order to feed her family. She was separated from her husband at the time who did not contribute financially to the home. To this day she still holds this professional position and has been promoted whilst her husband has returned to the house and now contributes his share. Her children are now grown up and have left home.

Dream Data Sheet 5.12: M.

Day 8, (-ve phase of Wise self)

"I come to M. (boyfriend), somewhere high in the mountains. ... But where is M.? He didn't take me into his house, is he loving me? In that moment I see two big artichokes. I know he is going to prepare a very festive meal for me. I try to put my things together. I see in my handbag that a tender grass that I picked up on the way to M. changed into a lot of small insects (anxious thoughts). I try to clean the bag."

Day 9

"I say to my parents: I have a new love. Whom? You know, I started the second relationship with Duson (a boyfriend when I was 17, dusa means soul)."

Day 10

"I am in one very big and ugly house. I visit a kind of school there and I am looking for a flat. There is a lack of flats in the city but in this building is a lot of free space. They offer me one flat for 270DM but I want to find something else. Very kind woman wants to show me all possibilities. She brings me to one where I stay. The room is complete square with a complete circle inside and has two or three floors. I think, yes, here I can live with M. The flat is cheaper than my flat now. I had the feeling that I move from the room of broken heart. Our new flat is on 4th and 5th floors, above it are two empty floors more."

Day 13 (+ve phase of the Wise self)

"I have to pick something from my flat. My flat is on the second floor of one restaurant. Around my table are sitting two couples who don't know that they are in my flat. There are a lot of handbags. I try to find my bag. My bag is black. I find it in a strange dark blue handbag. The two couples are coming from media. They are very strong, they have a lot of space in yellow press. They are talking about affairs and their own power. I go downstairs. I meet there a very scared and wrinkled girl who search in despair for something. I am upstairs again. The girl is standing before the two couples. They are very arrogant. She came five minutes too late and that is impossible, they cannot tolerate such things. I find myself with the two arrogant ladies in the toilette. When we go out I break their complaining about the 'five minute lateness'. I say: 'If you are complaining about five minutes that doesn't say anything about the girl, that says everything about your heart.' I am very resolute and I repeat the sentence several times. The women become very silent."

I meet the girl next day. Her face is very clear and clean. My sentence didn't give her a job but it gives her a deep human pride."

M. moves from a state of anxiety about her lover M. on Day 8 to the beginnings of self-love or soul (her own soul) love on Day 9, to moving out of a room or inner space of the broken heart, suggesting a healing of her heart perhaps through self-love? This was an exceptional case in which a psychological issue associated with the level of Loving self is mixed in the level of the Wise self. This appeared to be an example of the overlapping of levels.

On Day 13 a new dream brings up the issue of self-empowerment and the emerging of the +ve phase of the Wise self:

Clearly, M. has identified with the scared girl but in the dream she confronts her critical/arrogant/judgemental side in the form of the two couples. In doing so she regains her pride and experiences a kind of self-empowerment. This is a theme of the level of the Wise self.

Throughout the dream texts, it was apparent that the resolving of the psychological issues, related to a particular level of self, facilitated the emergence of new qualities, disguised as themes in the dreams. These qualities then began to form the basis of the emergence of a new, more subtle level of self in the retreatant's consciousness.

In fact, several psychological issues were associated with each level of self that was encountered. The process of encountering the issues, and the listing of these issues for each level of self follows:

Psychological issues arising in the level of the Instinctual self:

Typical psychological issues arising in the level of the Instinctual self would be jealousy, envy, violent anger, greed, fear, insecurity, obsessive thoughts, depression and sadness.

The most difficult aspect at this stage is the struggle to overcome these basic instinctual forces, as well as the negative thoughts and feelings that the retreatant encounters when first they are confined to a small room, without any mental

distraction such as reading, listening to music, talking, eating, looking at their world environment (outside the retreat room).

Basically they are deprived of all but the most essential human resources (a place to sleep, shelter and a modest simple diet). It is not surprising then that they will initially experience this 'deprivation of worldly comforts as negative'. However, this is what enables the beginnings of a change in consciousness to take place. In essence, this is a struggle with the instinctual and habitual aspects of the self that have to be put aside or 'becalmed' before the retreatant can turn within to focus on their inner world.

Psychological issues arising in the level of the Creative self:

The retreatant initially experiences themselves on the cognitive level, being relatively free of the instinctual drives. Now they are faced with their basic belief about themselves and their personal life. these cognitive beliefs (Beck, 1976), mind-scripts (Berne, 1961), sometimes called life-styles (Adler, 1956), gradually give way, as though they had been acting as 'veils' over the retreatant's natural perceptive ability. These issues were reflected clearly in the dreams. Now more spontaneous ideas emerge into consciousness, a new enthusiasm is experienced, associated with their ideas. Clearly the creative level of self has been accessed. The basic issue has been to peel away fixed ideas based on previous personal experience and to re-experience one's creativity without prejudicial ideas. The themes, listed in template 2, then begin to appear in the dreams, indicating the transit of the level of the Creative self.

Psychological issues arising in the level of the Loving self:

It was noticed by the researcher in the retreats he guided that, during the retreatant's experience of the Creative self, as well as in the dream texts of the same, the retreatant's beliefs about themselves affected how they felt about themselves. Thus arose the basic psychological issue of self-love. However, in overcoming this problem (by the changing of the personal belief system during the Creative self transit) and by experiencing a fresh, creative level of thought, the retreatant's feelings about themselves changed. This was reflected in the dream texts in terms of positive encounters with other people in their dreams. This indicated a better ability to relate

to others. These issues, which must be addressed prior to accessing the level of the Loving self, could be summed up as the psychological issue of self-love. Once this problem is overcome, the natural, virginal and harmonious qualities of the Loving self emerge into the dreams, as listed in template 3.

Psychological issues arising in the level of the Wise self:

This was by far the most difficult psychological hurdle for the retreatants to overcome. A few 'sailed past' this stage without much difficulty (S.F., S.L.) but these cases were exceptional. It seemed odd to the retreatants that having struggled to turn within, to have overcome the issues that blocked the Creative and Loving selves, just as they were beginning to experience the retreat in a much more positive way, e.g. feeling refreshed, energised, suddenly they were faced with tiredness, 'darkness' and depression. In the dreams, the issues revealed violent anger, conflict and distortions, such as drug addiction. The full list of negative themes are listed in template 4. However, as the retreat progressed, their dreams changed to become much more positive, revealing a basic overcoming of the inner conflicts between opposite aspects of the retreatants' psyche. Once again, the retreatants began to consciously recover, feeling re-energised in themselves and at a 'deeper level' of the retreat. The basic psychological issues that the conflicts centred around in the dreams were in being truthful, authentic, and overcoming personal distortions of will and anger. Developing faith and compassion were also issues. This was the level of self in which the struggle for the authentic self took place, resulting in a greater sense of wisdom and self understanding or a knowledge of themselves. Hence, the name of the 'Level of the Wise self'.

Psychological issues arising in the level of the Sacred self:

The psychological issues that arose in accessing the level of the Sacred self centred around self-image. In several cases, S., N.L.(ii), M., J., P.W., H., the difficult early life experiences as children emerged through the images in the dreams. A kind of corruption of the innocent child had taken place, resulting in a very poor self-image. This was apparent in the researcher's interaction with these retreatants. However, in overcoming these impressions, the themes of sacred temples, holy places, holy figures

emerged in the dreams, basically reflecting on an inner sense of the God-Ideal. As a result this was called the level of the Sacred self.

Psychological issues arising in the level of the Pure self:

Very few psychological issues came up around the level of the Pure self, as one would expect. In fact, only six out of the twenty-three retreats accessed this level. The two exceptional retreats, S.F. and S.L., showed their psychological issues in this level. However, in N.L.(ii) (see appendix V, p.23-24 level of Pure self), the psychological issue of guilt and resentment runs through her dreams. This could be summed up as the need to forgive herself and others (in her dreams it was her mother).

Summary

It was noted that specific psychological issues arose during the retreat process, associated with each level of self encountered. Before each level of self could be experienced and transited, the psychological issues blocking access to that level had to be overcome.

5.1.5 Cultural factors

Of the twenty-three retreats included in this study, several retreats were undertaken by retreatants from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, although English was used as the spoken and written language of communication. This gave the sample an interesting cultural mix that could possibly have had an effect or influence on the outcome of the dream study. Edgar (2003) draws attention clearly to the importance of culture in such studies:

'Psychology needs to understand how the dreamer uses concepts and language that are, of necessity, culturally based to narrate dreams. Anthropology, on the other hand, has to recognise that the communication and framing of dream narratives are always dependent upon the dream theory of the culturally bound group.' (Edgar, 2003, p.98.)

For example, in the Bushman culture, dreaming of a praying mantis means your guidance is speaking to you. In the African culture, if you dream of being called to be a Sangoma, a healer, or even if you have a healing dream, it is understood that you have permission to seek to train as a Sangoma.

In looking at the present dream sample of retreat dreams, therefore, it appears that the dream texts should be seen within the context of a retreat culture and that the participants' dreams be interpreted in terms of the culture's dream theory, i.e. a psycho-spiritual transformation theory which includes the alchemical process and the subtle levels of self. However, to start with, the retreatants had little or no notion of such a model of transformation or of any dream theory pertaining to retreats.

Secondly, for many of the retreatants, this was their first experience of a retreat and yet some of these so-called 'beginners' experienced a profound psycho-spiritual transformation, which was reflected in their dreams. Other more experienced retreatants, who had some knowledge of the retreat process, did not all experience the same degree of transformation. For some the transformation was significant, for others it was less so. Thus the cultural influence of the retreat or the repeated retreat experience did not appear to significantly influence the results. In fact, in spite of the cultural diversity of experience in the data sample, in every case the same underlying process (the stages of transformation) was observed as well as the subtle levels of self in their dreams. Indeed, it was not surprising that the retreat culture had little impact on the results, since the group being studied did not have a commonly understood dream theory, nor a commonly understood theory of the transformation process or of the levels of self, although the difficulties that some of the experienced retreatants had in comparison with some of the beginners were surprising. This seemed to emphasise the importance of the readiness of the retreatant for the transformation process.

Of course, the diversity of cultural backgrounds should be taken into account when reading the dream texts. However, although the use of English in the study made it slightly difficult for one or two retreatants when expressing themselves, this did not prevent the underlying features of the retreat process from being evident. This process was, as mentioned above, more dependent upon the readiness of the retreatant for a transformation experience than their cultural background. Indeed, in looking at

Table 5.1, there is a scattering of the results, when considering the different cultural backgrounds of the retreatants.

An analysis of the cultural factors follows:

The most identifiable cultural factor in the dream texts was to be found in the use of imagery. However, although English was not the first language of every retreatant - every retreat was guided using the English language and the dream texts were also written in English. What was noticeable was that the retreatants sometimes (although not often) recorded imagery in their dreams that was specific to their culture. For instance, an Afro-Caribbean retreatant used an image for her instinctual nature that was specific to her culture - that of a chicken being cooked (in the oven) - it comes alive, grew and has to be killed with a spear. She also made one reference to a shamanic figure. The Danish retreatant used Greenland as an identifiable spiritual landscape, and her reference to sovereignty was via the Danish Royal Prince. One of the two German retreatants experienced conflicts from "the Nazis" in his dreams whilst working through personal conflicts. The Croatian lady had a dream in which there was mourning for the people killed in the recent Serbian-Croatian conflict. The Kurdish man had an image of a mulberry tree from his homeland and also recorded a scene in an Arab trading market. However, most of the images recorded, such as cars, buildings, purification, conflict, healing, light, dark, country landscapes, city landscapes, etc., were common to all the retreatants' dream texts.

In fact when comparing the cultural factors to the psychological issues it was clear that the individual psychology and history of the retreatant was more significant than their cultural background. The imagery used largely related to their own issues. However, once these issues were resolved in themselves, the archetypal-like imagery listed in the themes of the templates became very clear. It appears, therefore, that the individual psychological issues initially tended to veil or eclipse the archetypal themes lying underneath more so than their culture. In some case the veils were slight, in other cases the veils were almost obscuring the underlying archetypal themes of the level of self. Once the Albedo stage began, however, the archetypal themes in the levels of self became clearer and more prominent.

However, a point to consider for the future would be to arrange for the guiding of the retreats and the records of the dreams to be in the retreatant's own first language. It is anticipated that this would allow for a richer cultural outlet for the retreatant, and possibly reveal more information regarding the archetypal themes, and how they are experienced through each culture. Apart from the use of language, a much greater emphasis could have been put on looking at the process as experienced by many more cultures than the sample included. This remains to be a future task. In spite of the fact that English was used, all participants had a fairly good understanding of English and were able to write in English reasonably clearly and understandably.

To sum up, there were two factors that proved to be more important than cultural influences in this retreat process. Retreat experience and knowledge of the retreat process did not prove to be an advantage or a significant influence on the results. Secondly, even though there were cultural differences between retreatants and some of these images appeared in the dreams symbolism, the underlying process was relatively unaffected. Instead, the individual psychological history of each retreat seemed to be far more significant, i.e. it featured far more prominently in the dream symbolism than the cultural influence.

Thus, although cultural factors have been included and accounted for, the examination of the dream texts showed that cultural factors do not seem to unduly affect the underlying process of transformation, nor do they seem to mask the archetypal themes that appear in the subtle levels of self.

5.1.6 The differences in age and gender in the sample

The ages of the retreatants varied between 35 and 62 years of age. Again in Table 5.1, no link between the age of the retreatant and their capacity for retreat was apparent. However, the physical demands of the retreat and the need for maturity and psychological insight suggest a natural upper and lower age limit of say 65 to 25 years of age. Five men who completed eleven retreats and nine women who completed thirteen retreats participated in this study. Several retreatants undertook more than one retreat. No clear differences due to gender were apparent, although a much larger sample of men and women could answer this question more comprehensively.

5.1.7 Visual metaphors used in the retreat dream process

Introduction

Visual metaphors in dreams can be a powerful means of conveying a picture of the psychic events that are taking place in the dreamer's psyche (Jung, 1968). Secondly, as suggested in the literature review, visual metaphors seemed to be used by the psyche to structure the inner experiences and memories so that the whole dream could be viewed as a visual narrative (Bruner, 1986, 1990). In fact the visual metaphors found in the dream themes enabled the researcher to pick out the themes in such a way that when put together in sequence, they told the story of the retreat. However, in this study, some visual metaphors repeated themselves in the same retreat and even in successive retreats. Furthermore, some visual metaphors were common to all the retreats, e.g. masculine and feminine images, images showing the relationship between the masculine and feminine, clothing, buildings and vehicles for travelling were used as metaphors that regularly changed form, evolving as the retreat progressed. This meant that it was possible to track the development of the retreat simply by following the changing visual images of the clothes, buildings, vehicles and men and women. Metaphors of numbers, houses, travelling, parents, children, colours, male and female, metals, planets, guides, figures and shadow figures, birth, clothing, music, healing, food all appeared in most of the retreatants' dreams. Some of these metaphors appeared in all the retreatants' dreams. All are important in that they indicate the state of the dreamer's psyche. They are also used in determining the levels of self and in recognising the stages in the transformation process.

When considering the subject of a psycho-spiritual transformation, clearly there will be differences in spiritual outlook between the different retreatants. In turn this will be reflected in their dream imagery. However, the significant point is that in this study the symbols employed in the dreams by the dreamer reflected what stage and level of self they were encountering during the transformation.

Specifically, the visual metaphors which appeared in the themes acted as vehicles to show the development of the process in much the same ways as the dream themes do. Indeed, some visual metaphors, such as the masculine and feminine dream figures, houses and clothing acted as independent trackers of the transformation process, e.g. the changes in the clothing images reflected the general changes taking place in the dream themes and in the retreatant. This realisation helped to clarify as well as to reinforce the reality of the transformation process. In many instances the visual images symbolised clear turning points in the retreat.

Visual metaphors, along with the dream themes, were therefore a key factor for the tracking of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. Many an image acted as a powerful metaphor which drew the reader's attention to important events and upheavals taking place in the psyche of the dreamer. A catalogue of visual metaphors used in the dream process is included in appendix XI.

The inner psychic changes from the very beginning of the retreat were described by the dream symbols and dream themes as the retreat progressed until at the end a very different set of dream images, symbolising the transformation within the psyche, appeared in the dreams. As such, the dreams were able to clearly show what had changed in the spiritual outlook of the retreatant. Visual metaphors and visual dreams act therefore as mirrors, accurately revealing the inner psychic changes.

5.1.8 An analysis of the influence of spiritual practices prescribed each day on the subtle level of self accessed in the dreams at night

Introduction

The retreatant was visited by their Retreat Guide each day for a short period, approximately half an hour. During this time the Retreat Guide tried to silently 'tune in' or sense essentially what the retreatant was experiencing. Long training has helped the guides to recognise the different stages and phases of the retreat process. Based on this, the guide will prescribe a set of spiritual practices for the day and the evening. The retreatant repeats these practices which are a form of concentrated prayers, over

and over again, opening themselves to the deeper meaning behind these practices. Meditation themes were also prescribed.

It was important therefore to investigate whether these practices might have influenced the deeper unconscious process within the retreatant such as might be revealed in their dreams. More obviously the practices might have influenced the retreatant's ideas and conscious thought processes, i.e. each set of practices could have contributed to some kind of inner image or ideal (mental construct) about that stage or aspect of their inner journey at that time.

If the daily spiritual practices could be shown to have influenced the retreatants' dreams at night then the results could be open to the charge that the vivid images and the themes present in the retreatants' dreams were merely mental constructs. This would imply that the levels of self may simply be artificially constructed or influenced only by the spiritual practices. On the other hand if the practices had little or no effect on the retreatant there would be no point in attempting spiritual practices in the first place. However, the purpose of the spiritual practices is to act as a catalyst and as a facilitator of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. They are designed to call forth inner psychic energies that are normally dormant in us. This calling forth can trigger a profound psycho-spiritual transformation in the retreatant (Retreat Manual, 1985). Secondly, the purpose of the practices is not to induce a dream state or to elicit dream images. Rather, the latter seem to be a by-product and consequence of the transformation process.

Thus an alternative possibility is that the daily concentration on spiritual practices might have contributed to the unleashing of psychic energies (rather than mental impressions caused by the day's spiritual practices) within the retreatants and that the consequences were reflected in their dreams. If this is the case then the daily practices prescribed would not necessarily be reflected by the themes in their dreams or in the subtle level of self that their dreams were transiting during the night. In fact many of the spiritual practices do not specifically relate to any particular subtle level of self or plane of consciousness, e.g. the Zikr practices such as the classical Zikr, bowing Zikr, Zikr of light, or wazaif such as Fazl, Shahid. Instead, they act as catalysts, activating the transformation process. However, where a spiritual practice

might have influenced the retreatant in terms of its association with a particular subtle level of self, then this has been indicated in the analysis that follows.

Firstly, three case examples of the lack of a connection between the spiritual practices given during the day and the themes recorded in the dreams at night follow.

The first case listed below was chosen as it represented the best example of a psycho-spiritual transformation on retreat. The subtle self themes in the dreams are the words/phrases underlined in the Dream themes column. The spiritual practices are listed for each day with their meaning in brackets and, if applicable, along with the associated subtle sense of self. The latter should be compared with the subtle sense of self listed for that night.

Dream Data Sheet 5.13: S.F.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Day 1</u>	<u>Subtle self -</u>	
	<u>Spiritual practices</u>	<u>Wise self</u>	<u>Night 1</u>
Morning	<i>Fazl (blessing)</i>	↑	
	<i>Hadi (the guide)/Wali (mastery)</i>		Creative self
	<i>bowing Zikr (a bowing prayer practice)</i>		
	<i>Batin (turning within)/salaam (peace)</i>		
		↓	
		<u>Sacred self</u>	
	<u>Day 2</u>		No dreams
	<u>Practices</u>		<u>Subtle self -</u>
Morning	<i>Examination of conscience</i>		<u>Night 2</u>
	<i>Nur-Munawir (focussing on light of one's aura)</i>		
	<i>Zikr of Love: Prayer (Love, Lover & Beloved are one) → <u>Loving Self</u></i>		Creative Self
	<i>Zikr: Classical recitation of prayer ('There is no God but God')</i>		
	<i>Shahid (witnessing yourself)/Khabir (being aware)</i>		

Dream Data Sheet 5.13: S.F. continued

<u>Time</u>	<u>Day 3</u>		<u>Dream themes</u>
	<u>Practices</u>	<u>Subtle self -</u>	
		<u>Night 3</u>	<u>1st dream</u>
Morning	<i>Fazl (blessing)</i>	Loving self	<i>Friend has a new <u>lover</u>, she wears a shining, <u>green</u>, <u>transparent</u> dress. <u>Green</u> make-up, <u>green</u> lipstick. She looks absolutely <u>beautiful</u>.</i>
	<i>Zikr (There is no God but God)</i>		<u>2nd dream</u>
	<i>Nur (the Divine Light) → <u>Pure self</u></i>		<i>Husband moved out. We <u>fought</u> over money.</i>
	<i>Shahid (Witnessing yourself)</i>		<i>Theme of music</i>
	<i>Alim (divine Insight) → <u>creative self</u></i>		
	<i>Khabir (Awareness)</i>		
	<i>Haqq (Truth) → <u>Wise self</u></i>	Start of Wise self	
	<u>Day 4</u>	<u>Subtle self -</u>	
	<u>Practices</u>	<u>Night 4</u>	
Morning	<i>Silent Zikr</i>	Wise self	<u>Conflict</u>
	<i>Crescent moon + star Zikr</i>		<u>Vomiting and healing</u>
	<i>Salaam/Nur/Quddus/Hu</i>		<u>Death and future marriage</u>
	<i>Peace/light/spirit/transcendence</i>		<u>Black and white as contrasts</u>
	↓ ↓ ↓		
	<u>Sacred self / <u>Pure self</u> / <u>no self</u></u>		
	<u>Day 5</u>	<u>Subtle self -</u>	
	<u>Practices</u>	<u>Night 5</u>	
Morning	<i>Zikr</i>	Wise self	No dreams/ <u>Fearful thoughts</u>
	<i>Bowing Zikr</i>		of junk, cobwebs in her attic
	<i>Haqq/Nur/Quddus/Hu</i>		and of <u>rats</u>
	<i>Truth/light/spirit/transcendence</i>		<u>Murder fantasy</u>
	↓ ↓ ↓		
	<u>Wise self / <u>Pure self</u> / <u>no self</u></u>		
	<u>Day 6</u>	<u>Subtle self -</u>	
	<u>Practices</u>	<u>day 6</u>	
	In early morning - no practices	Sacred self	<i>Virgin Mary) <u>sacred figures</u></i>
			<i>Melchizedek)</i>
			<i>Court of <u>splendour</u></i>
			<i>Monk holds a <u>light</u> in</i>
			<i>wounded person's heart</i>
			<i>Brilliant, light, <u>green</u></i>
			<i>landscape of nature and</i>
			<i>Greek temples</i>
			<i>Heavenly music of Bach</i>
			<i>Magnificence</i>

Dream Data Sheet 5.13: S.F. continued

<u>Time</u>	<u>Day 8</u>	<u>Subtle self -</u>	<u>Dream themes</u>
	<u>Practices</u>	<u>Day 8</u>	<u>Visionary experiences (no dreams)</u>
			4. <i>Experiences herself rising into dome of a cathedral of light. Beings of light appear.</i>
<u>After-noon</u>	Silent Zikr	Virtually no self	5. <i>Sees <u>intense white light above crown</u>. Experiences rising up to light. Light starts to pour down from crown into centre of her chest.</i>
<u>Evening</u>	Zikr	No self	6. <i><u>Light expands, filling her body and beyond.</u> Bodiness disperses Completely. Sense of light but no sense of self.</i>
	<u>Day 9</u>		
<u>Early morning</u>	<u>Practices</u> Breath practices	<u>Subtle self -</u> <u>Day 9</u> Porous sense of self	<u>Experience</u> <i><u>Sense of being amongst stars.</u> Memory of past returns. Experiences essence of people.</i>
	<u>Day 9</u>		
<u>Daytime</u>	<u>Practices</u> Watching her breath	<u>Subtle self -</u> <u>Day 9</u> Porous sense of self/no self	<u>Visionary experiences (no dreams)</u> <u>Vision</u> <i>Black, white and coloured dots in front of her eyes. Visions of purgatory - destruction. Felt devastated. Sense of 'dark night of the soul'.</i>

Text cut off in original

Dream Data Sheet 5.14: M.H. (ii) continued

<u>Time</u>	<u>Day 6</u> <u>Practices - Day 6</u>		<u>Subtle sense</u> <u>of self -</u> <u>Night 6</u>	<u>Dream themes - Night 6</u>
Day	<i>Qaher-Qadr</i> ← <u>Sacred</u> self - <u>Wise</u> self <i>Rahman-Rahim</i> ← <u>Wise</u> self <i>Qaher - Salaam</i> <u>Sacred</u> self ← (Divine Sovereignty - Divine Peace) 4 part Zikr classical Zikr Meditation 'Who am I?'		Wise self	1. <i>Flat was on fire. Street on fire. M.H. calls for help. Daughter in hospital for a broken collar bone. Recuperating. Little innocent boy playing happily with marbles (a <u>sacred</u> self theme)</i>
Evening	<i>Hanun Jamil Wal Ikran</i> ← <u>Sacred</u> self (Queen of Beauty and Splendour) <i>Quddus - Hayy</i> (Spirit into life) <i>Zikr of Love</i> ← <u>Rubedo</u> stage <u>Loving</u> self			

Comments:

This was an interesting example showing the influence (theme 1, night 5) and presence of the daily spiritual practice in the dream, i.e. 'Qaher'. What is more interesting is the fact that this word 'Qaher', which was given each day as a practice, carries the theme of sovereignty, which, according to the templates of the subtle levels of self, is a Sacred self theme. However, the context of the dream shows the theme of the Loving self throughout both dreams on night 5. Thus it would seem that the spiritual practice on this occasion was impressed on the mind of the dreamer, M.H., but that this practice was merely a mental impression placed upon the theme of the Loving self.

However, the theme changes in dream 3, night 5, to represent the subtle level of the 'Wise self'. This subtle self continues to be present through the dream themes on night 6, and then right at the end of dream 1 a 'sacred self' theme appears, suggesting that the dreamer might be beginning to enter the level of the Sacred self.

Conclusion

The analysis of the possible influence of the spiritual practices on the dreams at night was carried out for each set of retreatants' dreams. The spiritual practices and their meaning was reviewed each day and then compared with the themes that appeared in the dreams at night. Of the twenty retreats examined, covering hundreds of days of retreat, in only five instances did the dreams show one of the practices as being present in one of these themes in the dreams at night. The conclusion was that there was very little evidence to suggest that the spiritual practices directly influenced the contents, imagery or themes of the retreatants' dreams at night. In some cases, during the retreat, the guide (the researcher) was able to follow the dreams told to him by the retreatant and so use them as a guide to ascertaining which level of subtle self the retreatant had accessed. In these cases, the guide prescribed practices to support this level of self. In all the other cases, the guides being unaware of the role of dreams were clearly not able to make use of the dreams when deciding on which spiritual practices to prescribe. In such cases the spiritual practices given did not necessarily support the subtle level of self being accessed at the time. Nevertheless, the same pattern of unfoldment of each level of subtle self still proceeded in all the retreats. It can be seen in the quantitative analysis which follows that in the colour count rankings of Table 5.1, some retreatants at the top end of the Table had the researcher as guide, who made use of their dreams in deciding which spiritual practices to give. Other retreats at the top end of Table 5.1 had guides who did not make use of the dreams when prescribing spiritual practices. Similarly, for those in the middle and lower rankings of the Table. Thus it was not possible to discern any difference in the results between the influence of a guide who made use of the retreatants' dreams and those who did not.

In conclusion, although the spiritual practices contributed to the psycho-spiritual transformation, their influence, even though observable on only one occasion, mentioned as an example above, was not directly evidenced in the themes of the dreams or in the dream imagery.

5.2 The Quantitative Analysis

Introduction

The thematic analysis of the retreat dream texts enabled the various levels of self as well as the stages of the process to be discerned. Indeed, the nature of this study necessitated the use of a heuristic approach which included various transpersonal research methods. However, whilst the results of the thematic analysis were clear, it seemed necessary to be able to cross-check this by using another research method.

The idea for a different research method was sparked by Jung's statement that an important sign of a profound psycho-spiritual transformation process was the appearance of colour and light in the dreams (Jung, 1968). A brief check on the number of times colour and light appeared in the dream texts revealed some interesting features for the analysis to consider. For example, it was noticed overall that the frequency of appearance of colour and light increased from the start of the retreat until a peak was reached, whereupon the number of times colour and light appeared again began to diminish right up to the end of the retreat. This suggested that a psychic change was taking place that followed the cycle of the retreat process. Further, it was a simple, relatively objective quantitative method.

It was also decided to include the number of times black appeared in the dreams since it was noticed that the dream themes and the visual metaphors of black that they carried, in whatever form or shape they appeared, seemed to change in subsequent dreams to reveal colour images. This corresponded to Jung's notion that the psychic and spiritual potentials that are unconscious in us appear initially in our dreams as shadowy, dark or threatening. They appear this way to the dreamer because the dreamer's conscious attitude (even in dreams) is opposed to or unaware of the unconscious aspects in their psyche. When such unconscious aspects become activated they begin to appear in the dreamer's dreams, and finally emerge consciously into their personality, demanding that they be integrated into the conscious self. If they are not, they remain in conflict with the dreamer's conscious side.

Thus a quantitative research method, recording the number of times that light, colour and dark appeared in the dreams each day, throughout each retreat, was employed. The results of this quantitative method can also then be compared with the results of the thematic analysis.

5.2.1 Method of analysis and Graphs of the Colour Count for each Retreat

Assuming light/dark and colour are an indication of the degree of psycho-spiritual transformation (Jung, 1968), each retreat dream text was then scanned throughout the entire process for the number of times that colours (including black and white) and light/dark appeared in the process. The frequency of colour/light/dark was then plotted in graph form against time (in days), i.e. colours, light and dark were counted and recorded for each day and plotted against time. The graphs of nineteen retreats out of the sample of twenty three retreats are displayed below, i.e. four retreats were not considered as having reliable data for the colour count:

- i. one, H., was recorded by the researcher from the dreamer, hence many colours may have been omitted
- ii. two retreats, R.J.(i), M.H.(i), included colours from waking images as well as dreams rather than from dreams only. This tended to distort the colour count and was regarded as more subjective data, i.e. less reliable
- iii. one retreat, P.W.(iv), was obviously affected by discord between the retreat guide and the retreatant. The retreatant ignoring the guided suggestions became increasingly narcissistic, preferring instead to follow his own ideas, i.e. he instead generated his own internal images consciously. This retreat was omitted as unreliable data.

This method relies on the regular recording as well as the timing of the dreams. In addition, the colour/light/dark images must be counted from the dreams and not from the waking images, as the latter are prone to the influence of conscious fantasies, which can distort the spontaneousness of the data from the dreams. Hence, this

method relies on the first hand recording of the dream by the dreamer immediately upon waking up.

5.2.2 Analysis and Graphs of Colour Count vs. Time for each Retreat

The nineteen graphs, marked 1 to 19, are included below. The first remarkable feature is the increasing appearance of colour/light as the retreat proceeds. Secondly, the 'colour spectra' appear to coincide with the stages of the retreat process and the levels of 'self' encountered in the thematic analysis. However, although the agreement between the colour spectra in the graphs is quite close to the stages and levels of self earmarked in the thematic analysis, there are small overlaps. This can be accounted for by the inevitable inaccuracies which can occur in the thematic analysis, such as subjective judgement and/or errors in recording the colours in the dreams - some data could have been lost in forgetting a colour in a dream, for example, and in some cases the wrong colours could have been remembered. This is discussed in detail below in 'overlapping of levels of self and the stages of retreat'. Nevertheless, the agreement between the two methods of analysis is remarkably good considering the likelihood of errors creeping into the dream recordings and the thematic analysis.

Specific comments on graphs 1 to 19

The graphs of colour-count versus time are presented in the same order as the colour-count rankings. The results of the thematic analysis are marked on each graph for comparison with the colour-count analysis. The graphs are presented as listed in Table 5.1.

Graph 1. S.F., 15 Days

This graph shows a remarkably short nigredo period. The graph rises to a peak on Day 6 and then slowly tapers off to the end of the Rubedo period. The Creative self is a relatively short period and somewhat indistinct. However, the Loving self and the Wise self are clearly indicated whilst the Sacred self and Pure self are indistinguishable. The Citrinitas stage is prominent and clearly marked, whilst the Rubedo stage sees a gradual winding down the retreat.

Graph 2. N.L. (i), 14 Days

This graph shows a steadily increasing appearance of light as the retreat proceeds, reaching a peak on days 10 and 12, before tapering off by day 14. Citrinitas/Rubedo appear indistinguishable in the texts and are treated as one stage. The Creative, Loving and Wise self are all clearly indicated as peaks or 'spectra'. This retreatant did not proceed any further in the Albedo stage than the level of the Wise self.

Graph 3. S.L., 12 Days

As in graph 1, the Nigredo period is unusually short. The Creative self and Loving self are not distinguishable from the graph. The Wise self is less in evidence, yet clearly marked and the Sacred self and Pure self are indistinguishable, yet when together they show the peak of the retreat in terms of light. Citrinitas is between days 7 and 9 and yet the shape of the graph does not quite reflect the significance of the themes marked for Citrinitas in the thematic analysis. Rubedo appears at day 9 with the light again beginning to increase in frequency right up to day 12.

Graph 4. R.J. (ii), 9 Days

This graph rises to a peak on day 8, the level of the Wise self, whilst also registering peaks on day 4 (Creative self) and day 6 (Loving self). The peaks or levels of self are prominent and clearly differentiated. The retreat ended with R.J. resolving important issues to do with some of the themes of the Wise self. The Citrinitas and Rubedo stages are not present.

Graph 5. V., 21 Days

This graph rises to a peak on day 11, the level of the Wise self, and then tails off towards the end on day 19. All six levels of self are shown on the graph, coinciding well with the thematic analysis. The Citrinitas and Rubedo stages do not appear in the graph or in the thematic analysis.

Graph 6. S., 40 Days

The Nigredo stage is relatively short, 5 days.

This graph rises to a peak on day 22, the level of the Sacred self, and then gradually tapers off to day 40. The level of the Pure self is not present and the Citrinitas and Rubedo stages are distinguishable, days 26 to 34 and days 34 to 40 respectively. One feature of this graph is the 'double peak' in the Instinctual self (Nigredo stage), Loving self, Sacred self, Citrinitas stage and in the Rubedo stage. It would seem as though the first of the pair of each 'double peaks' is a precursor or breakthrough point for the second of the pair of each 'double peak' which is a larger peak. This phenomenon shows itself in several of the retreatants' colour-count graphs, but is most clearly exemplified in Graph 6.

Graph 7. P.W. (i), 25 Days

The Nigredo stage lasted for almost one third of the retreat time. Albedo is by far the longest stage and Citrinitas is not apparent. Rubedo is relatively short. The graph rises to a peak on day 10, during the Creative self. The Loving self, Wise self and Sacred self are all clearly differentiated. As in graph 6 above, 'double peaks', although less obvious, are present through the graph, with the difference that the first of the two peaks is larger, whereas the reverse was true in Graph 6.

Graph 8. N.L. (ii), 40 Days

Graph 8 has a relatively short Nigredo stage. The graph peaks on day 8, the Loving self. The Creative self, Loving self, Wise self and Sacred self are all clearly evident, albeit the obvious lack of prominence of the Wise self. The Pure self does not appear clearly although days 22 and 24 show the beginnings of a peak emerging. The Citrinitas and Rubedo stages are not clearly distinguishable. The graph however shows a gradual increase in the light in these last two stages.

Graph 9. P.W. (vi), 20 Days

Again the graph shows a steady increase in light as the retreat progresses. The peak is in the Rubedo stage, although the Albedo stage showed a peak between days 9 and 11, where the Loving self and Wise self are indistinguishable. This was similar to the thematic analysis. The Albedo stage stops at day 17, whereas in the thematic analysis it stops at day 18. This graph, when compared with Graph 7, shows a change in emphasis of the peak. In Graph 7 it is in the Creative self, in Graph 9 it is in the Rubedo stage, achieving a higher peak than in Graph 7. This can be considered as progress in between the 1995 and 2002 retreats.

Graph 10. Si.L., 9 Days

This graph gradually builds to a peak on day 6, the level of the Wise self, although it seems as though the Sacred self is just beginning to emerge between days 8 and 9. The Creative self and Loving self, as in the text, are merged with each other, showing a broad peak between days 3 and 4.

Graph 11. A.L., 8 Days

This graph is noticeable because the peak is in Nigredo. However, once the Albedo stage starts, there is a gradual movement of the curve towards a second peak on day 7, in the Creative self. Similarly, in the post-retreat dreams, which were also mapped onto the graph, a third peak is shown on day 10, the level of the Loving self.

Graph 12. M., 30 Days

Again the graph shows a gradual increase in the amount of light in the dreams as the retreat progresses. The Instinctual self (Nigredo stage), Creative self, Loving self, Wise self and Sacred self all appear and coincide with the thematic analysis. What is noticeable about this retreat is that almost half the time is spent in the Citrinitas/Rubedo stage, which registers the peak in colour frequency on day 23. This retreat was one of three that had colour combinations of opposite colours (turquoise-red jacket) in the level of the Wise self, day 11, which is one of the colour-count peaks on this graph.

Graph 13. M.H. (ii), 7 Days

Graph 13 shows a steady increase in light as the retreat proceeds, with the peak being on day 5, the level of the Loving self. Whilst the text and thematic analysis marked the Instinctual self, Creative self, Loving self and Wise self, this graph only shows the Instinctual self, the Loving self and Wise self being lumped together in one peak. Although the retreatant had a transformation dream on the third night of the retreat, whereby the instincts were clearly being transformed, no obvious colours were apparent in the dream. However, the next day, day 4, saw M.H. have an inspiring vision for a weekend workshop around the healing of the human heart. Clearly this was to do with her own experience at the time, and paved the way for entry to the Loving self on day 5. As it was a short retreat, and as M.H.(ii) was relatively inexperienced, it is not surprising that she did not go further than the level of the Wise self.

Graph 14. J. (ii), 40 Days

The graph rises steadily to a peak on day 28, in the stage of Citrinitas/Rubedo, and then tapers off to the end on day 40. The Nigredo stage (Instinctual self) is short, however the peaks for the Creative self all coincide with the thematic analysis. When this graph is compared with Graph 19, J. (ii) 1998, it is clear that the peak of the graph has shifted from the Nigredo phase in Graph 19, to the Citrinitas/Rubedo stage in Graph 14. By repeating the retreat, and lengthening it, J. has matured and his

transformation process now shows a steady increase in light building up to the last phase of the retreat.

Graph 15. P.W. (ii), 25 Days

Graph 15 shows a steadily increasing peak of light until the main peak, on day 15, 16, the level of the Wise self. This contrasts with Graph 7, in which P.W. (i), showed a peak in the level of the Creative self (the mind) and tapered off from there to the end of the retreat. This shows a progression from 1995 to 1996. In Graph 15, the Creative self, Loving self, Wise self and Sacred self are all distinct peaks agreeing with the thematic analysis.

Graph 16. P.W. (v), 30 Days

Graph 16, P.W.(v), follows a disastrous retreat, P.W.(iv), in which conflict with the guide rendered the dream data almost useless. It seems that P.W.(v) was still recovering from the shock of the previous year's retreat and so the peak is on day 13, the level of the Creative self. Thus the pattern of the graph has regressed back to that of P.W.(i). However, despite this, and despite the fact that he took longer to get through the Nigredo stage (10 days), whereas in P.W.(i) it was 8 days, he does show the other levels of self clearly up to the Sacred self. Two peaks are shown in the Wise self, one clearly the negative phase of the Wise self and the other clearly shows the positive phase of the Wise self. The last retreat, P.W.(vi), showed a progression on from P.W.(v), as discussed in Graph 9 above. Graph 16 shows good agreement with the thematic analysis, which is marked on the graph sheet.

Graph 17. P.W.(iii), 28 Days

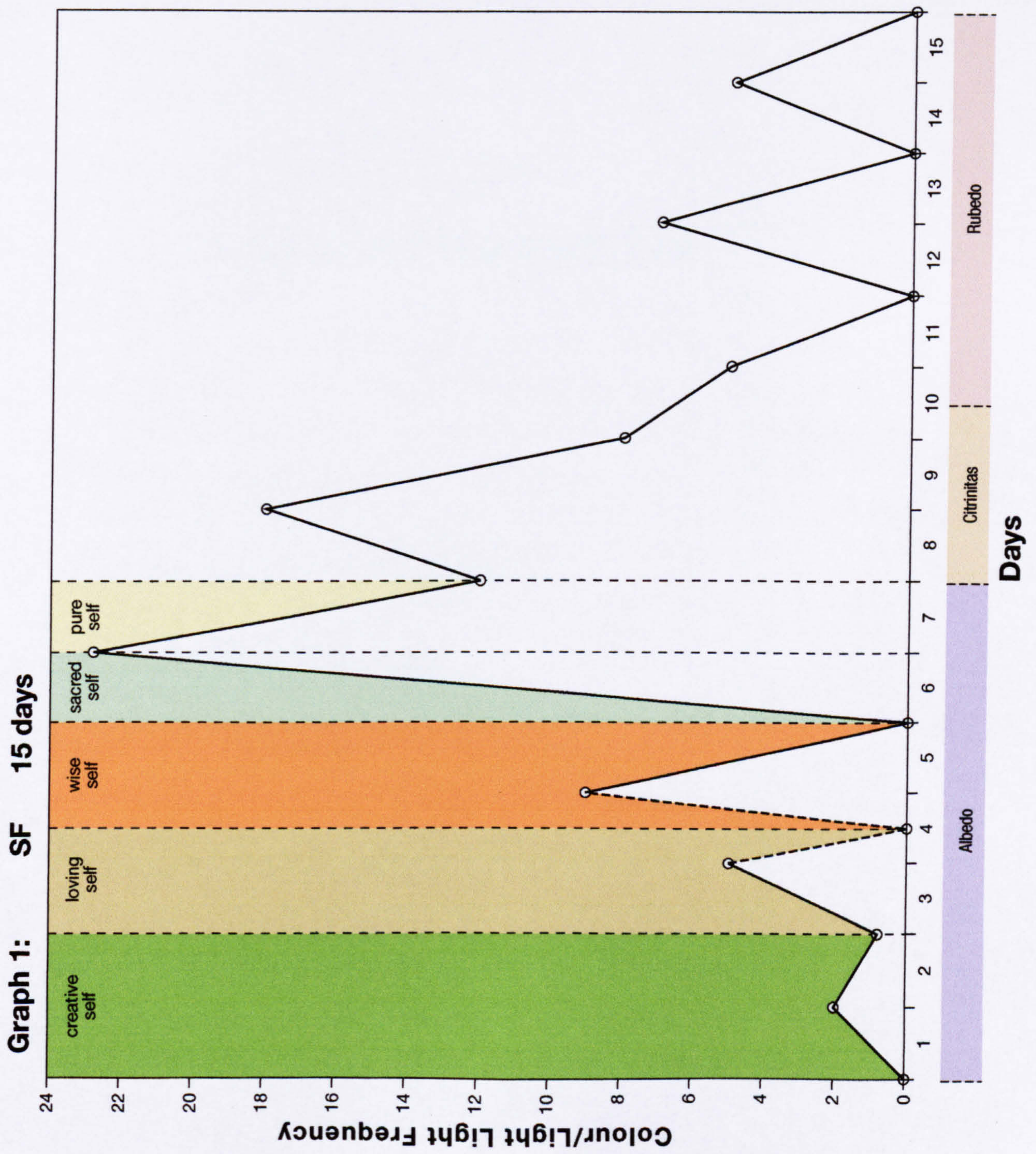
Graph 17 should be seen in the light of a progression from Graph 15, P.W.(ii). The graph rises steadily to a peak on day 20, 21, the level of the Sacred self, and then tapers off. All the levels of self from the Instinctual self to the Pure self are clearly evident, coinciding well with the thematic analysis.

Graph 18. K., 6 Days

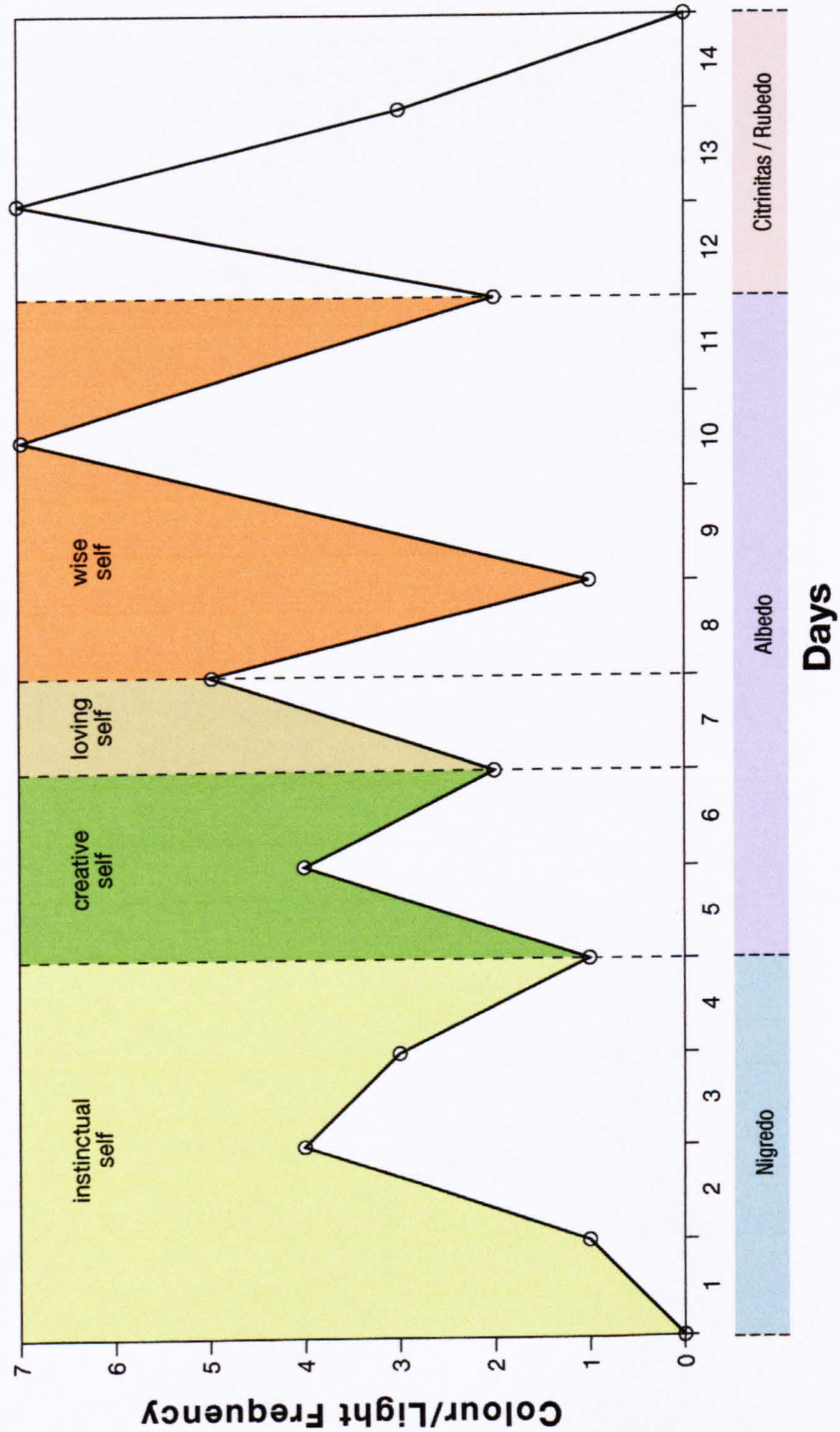
Graph 18 shows a steady increase in light until day 4, the level of the Creative self. Thereafter it tapers off to the end of the retreat, day 6. The day after the retreat, day 7, the retreat reaches the level of the Wise self. Basically, this retreat has focussed on accessing the level of the Creative self. Being a short retreat, and given that the retreatant is a beginner, this result is more likely to be expected. The peaks of the Instinctual self and Creative self agree closely with the thematic analysis.

Graph 19. J.(i), 29 Days

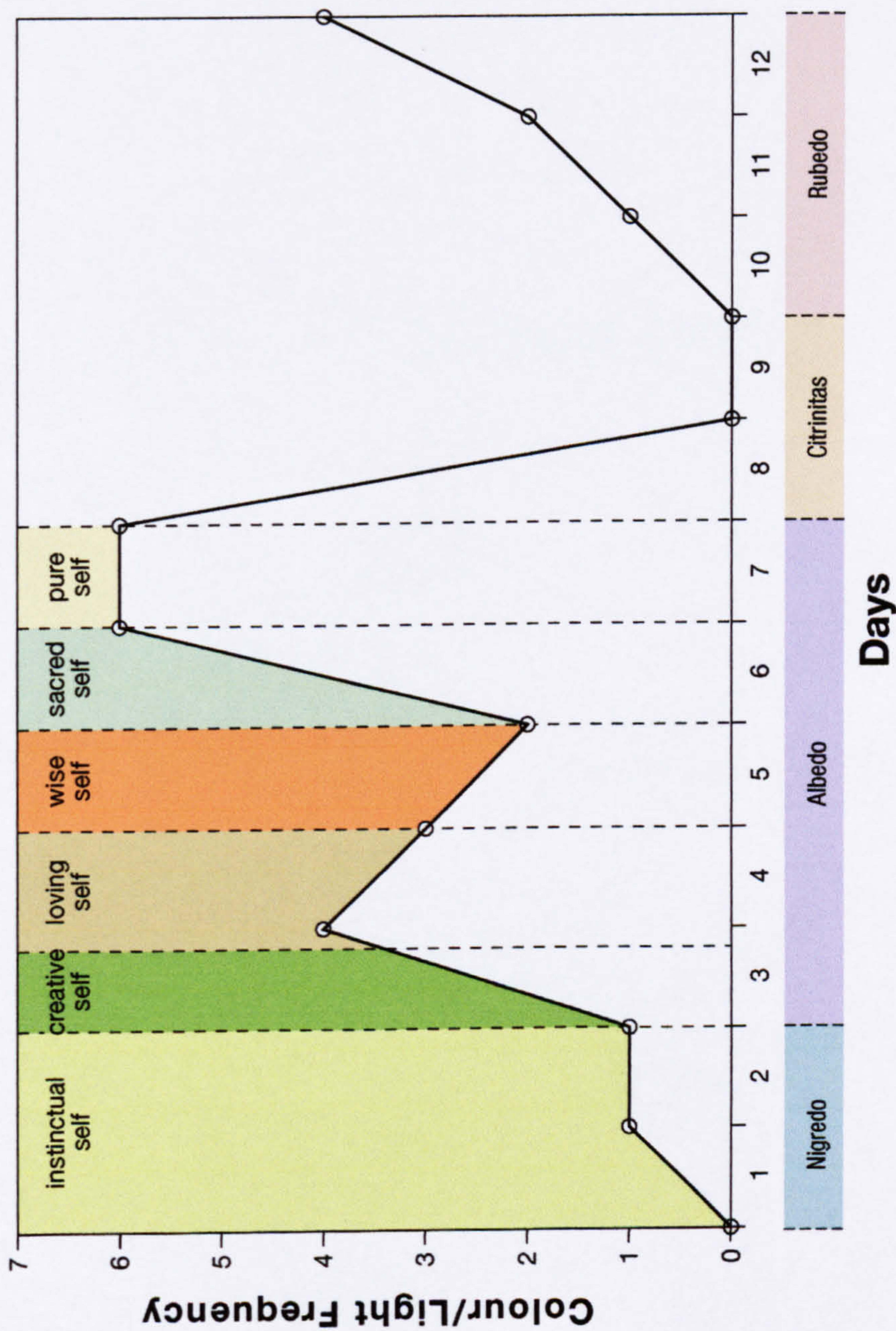
Graph 19 shows a peak on day 8, the level of the Instinctual self. Thereafter the frequency of appearance of light in the dreams tapers off until the end of the retreat. There are only two stages of the retreat, Nigredo and Albedo. The Instinctual, Creative, Loving and Wise selves are all clearly evident and coincide well with the thematic analysis. This was his first retreat and so the peak in the Instinctual self is to be expected. By J.(ii), as shown in Graph 14, J. has progressed showing increasing amounts of light in the retreat dreams as the retreat progressed, right up to the last stage of the retreat, Citrinitas/Rubedo.



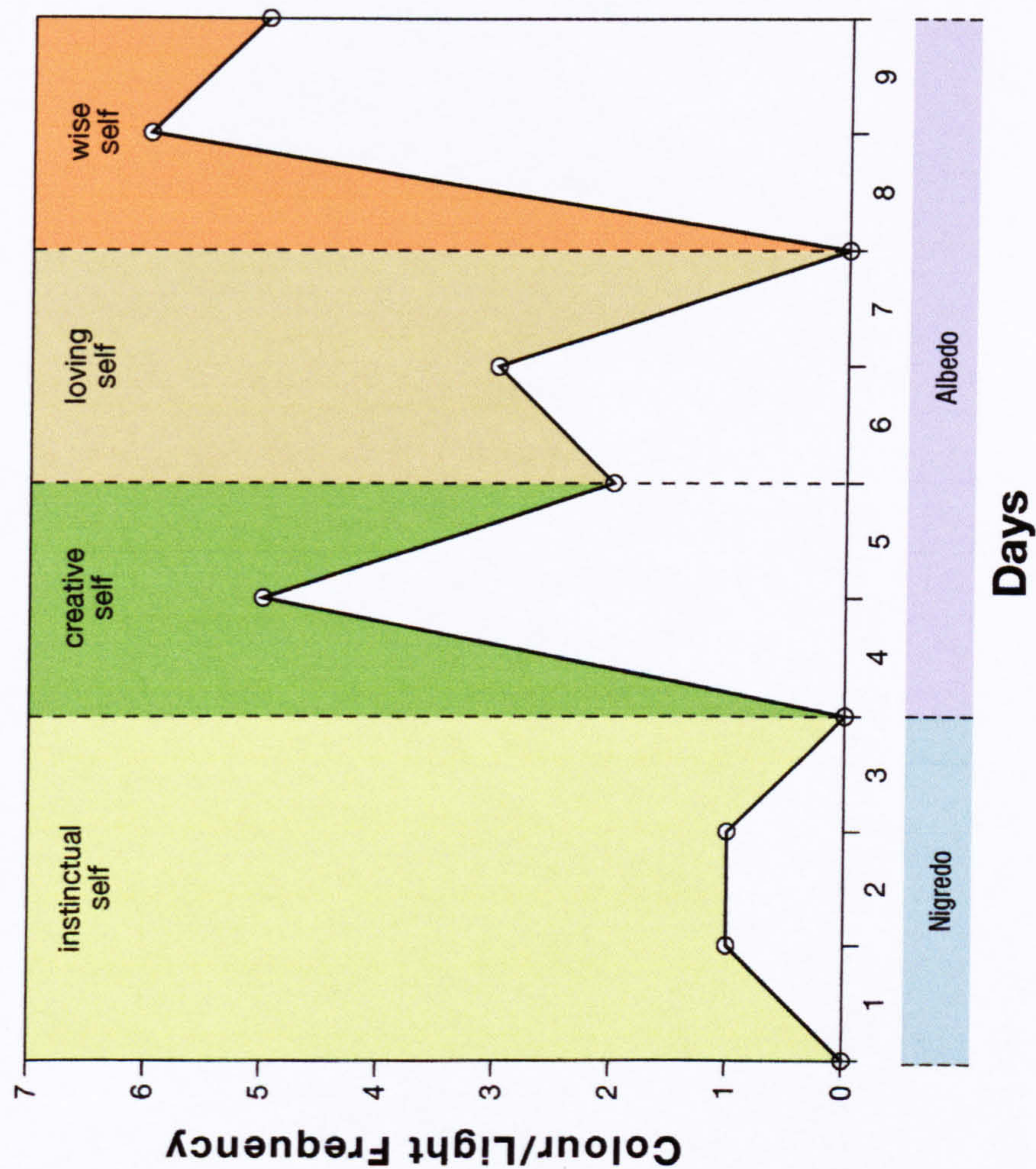
Graph 2: NL (i) 14 days



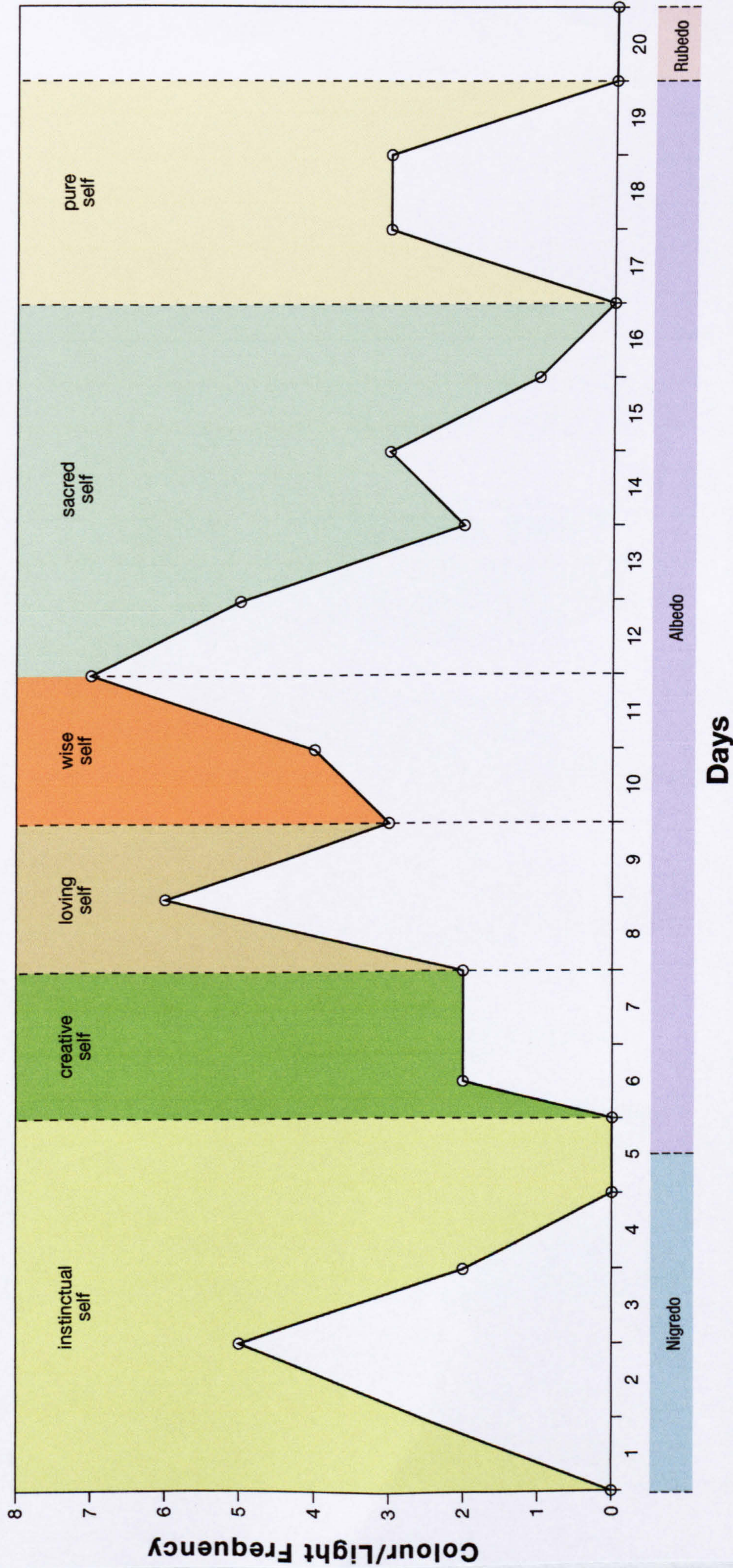
Graph 3: SL 12 days



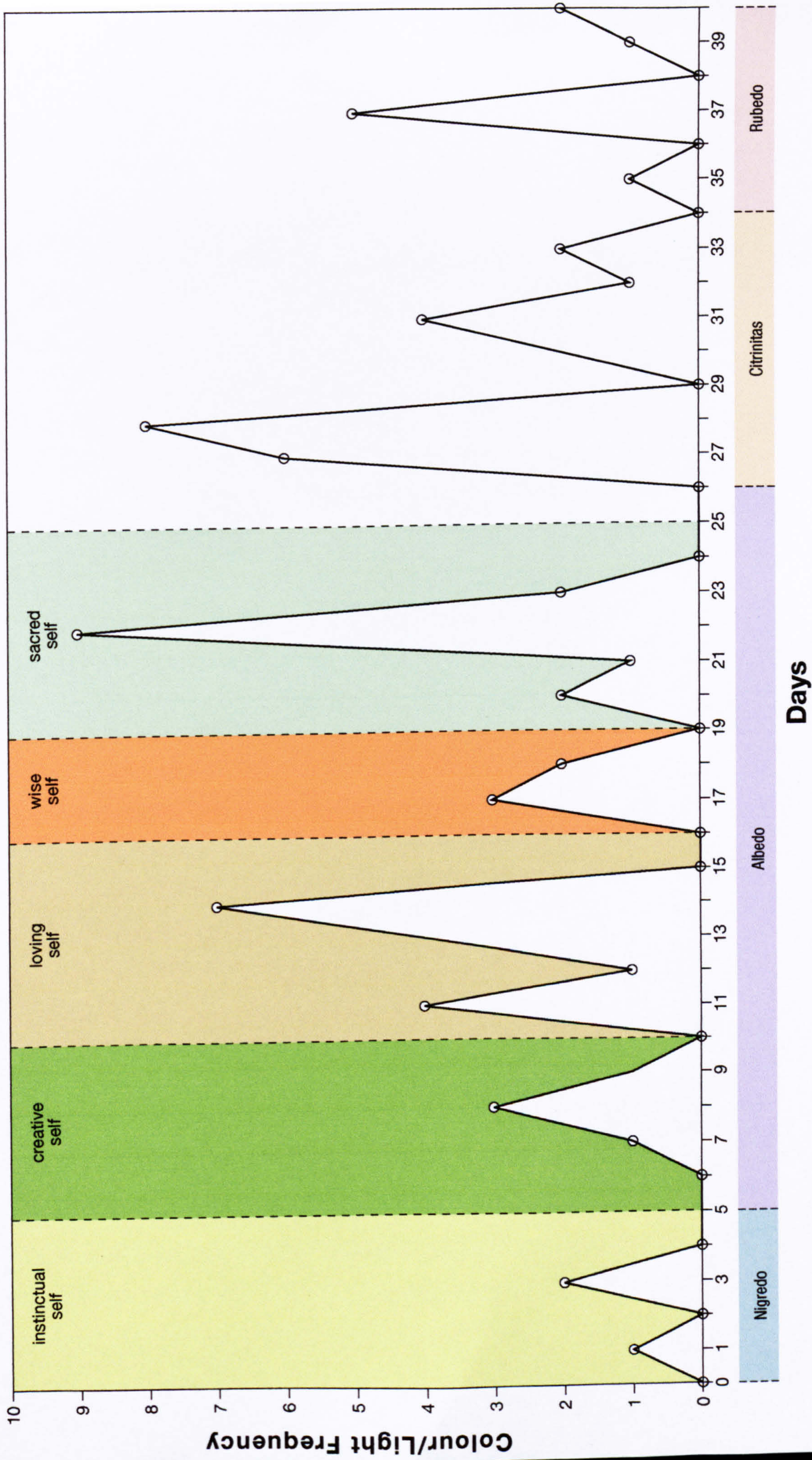
Graph 4: RJ (ii) 9 days



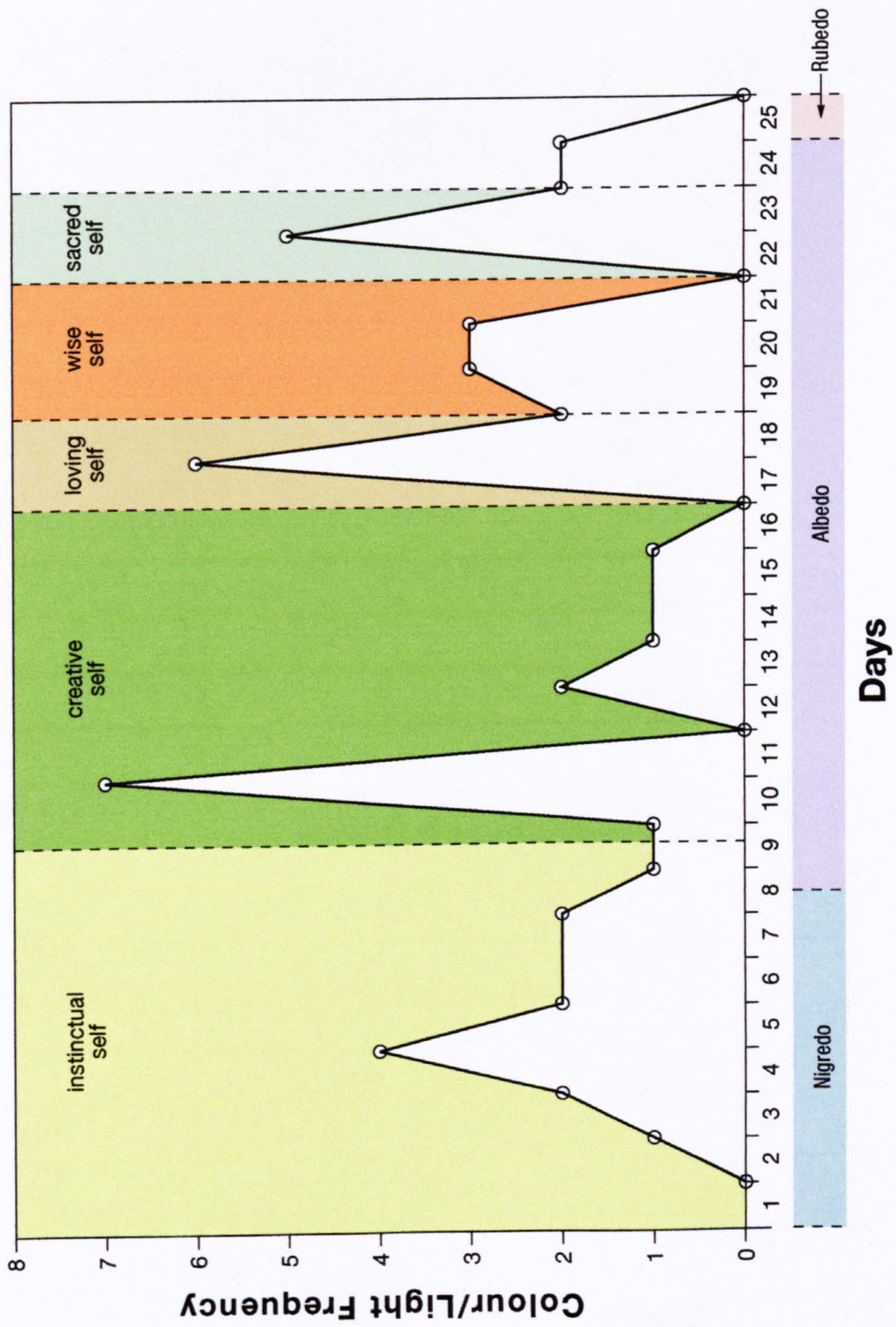
Graph 5: V: 21 days



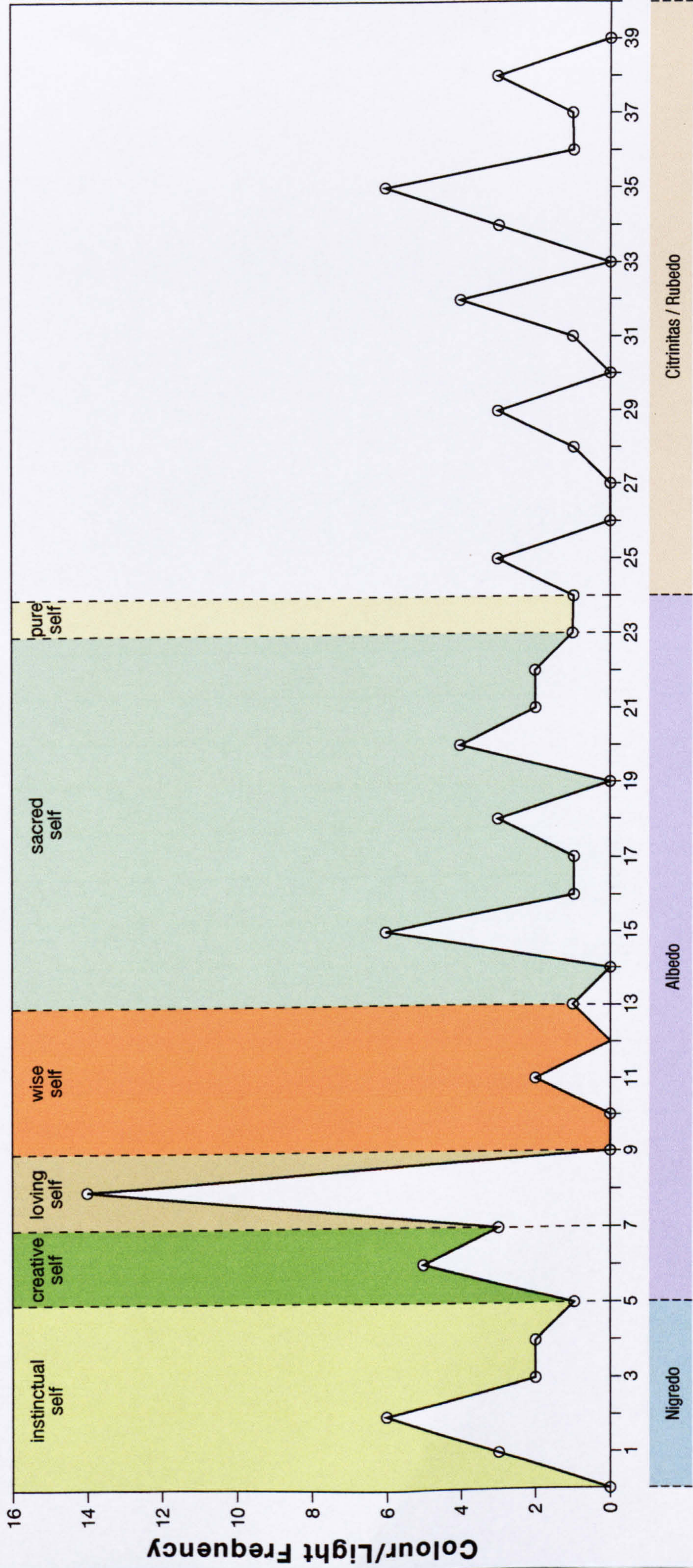
Graph 6: S 40 days



Graph 7: PW (i) 25 days

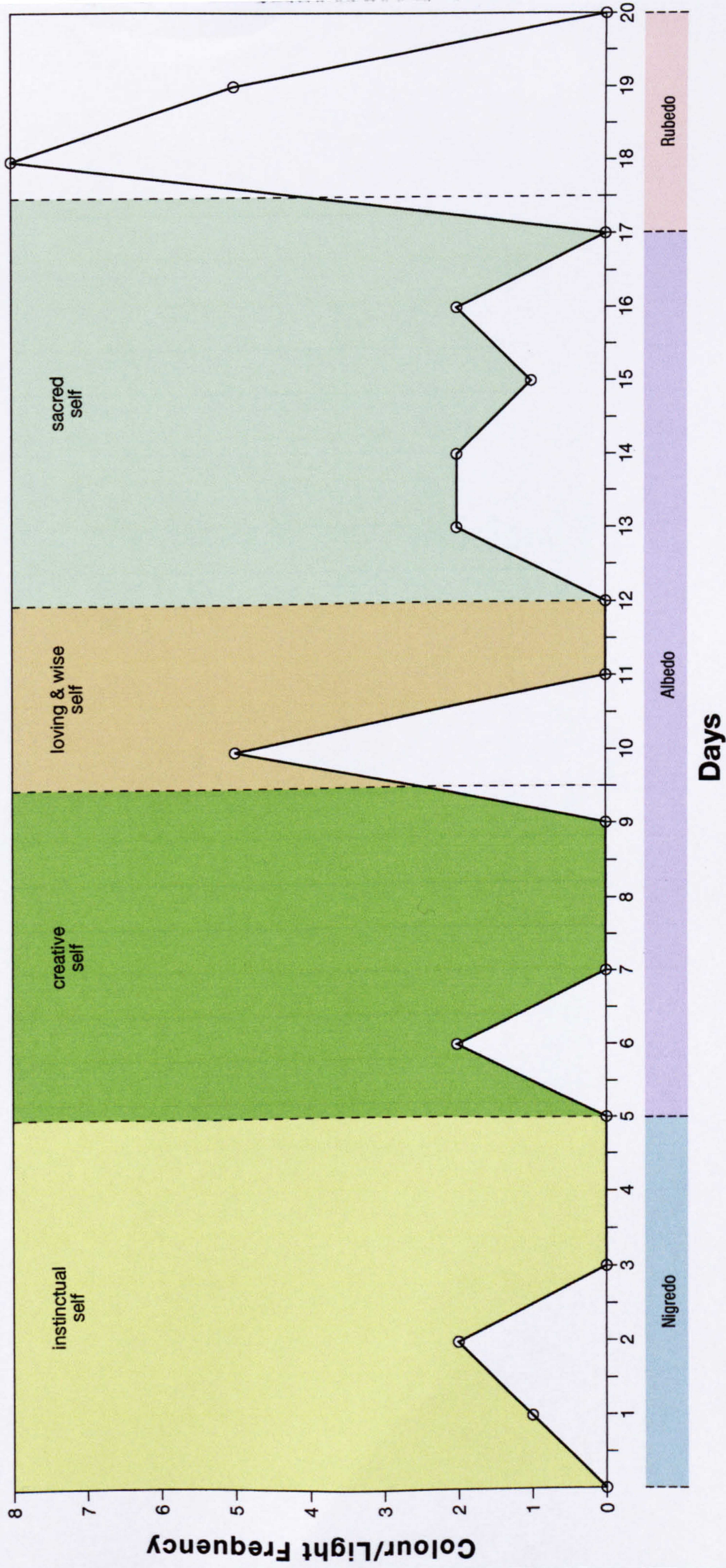


Graph 8: N.L.- (ii) 40 days

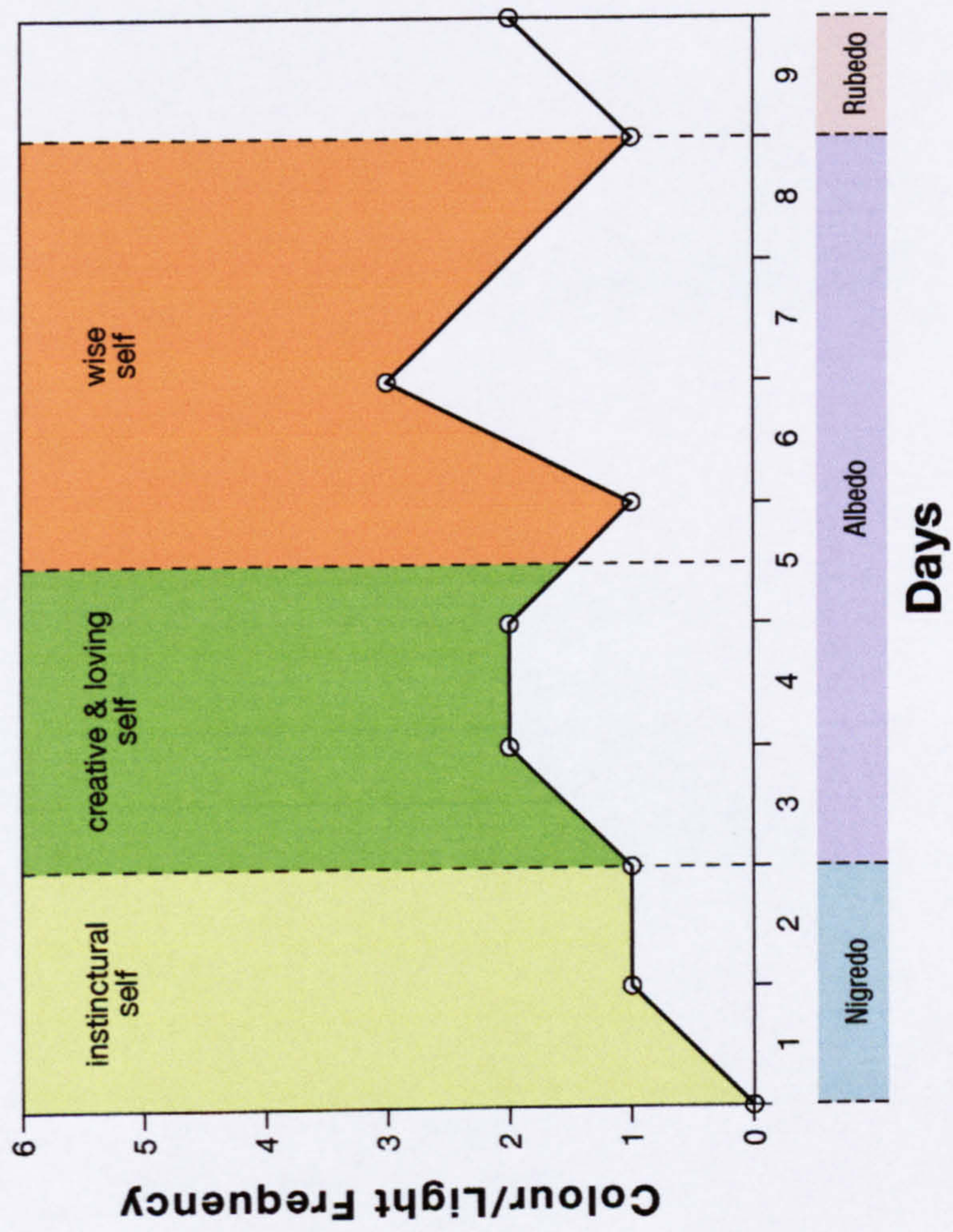


Days

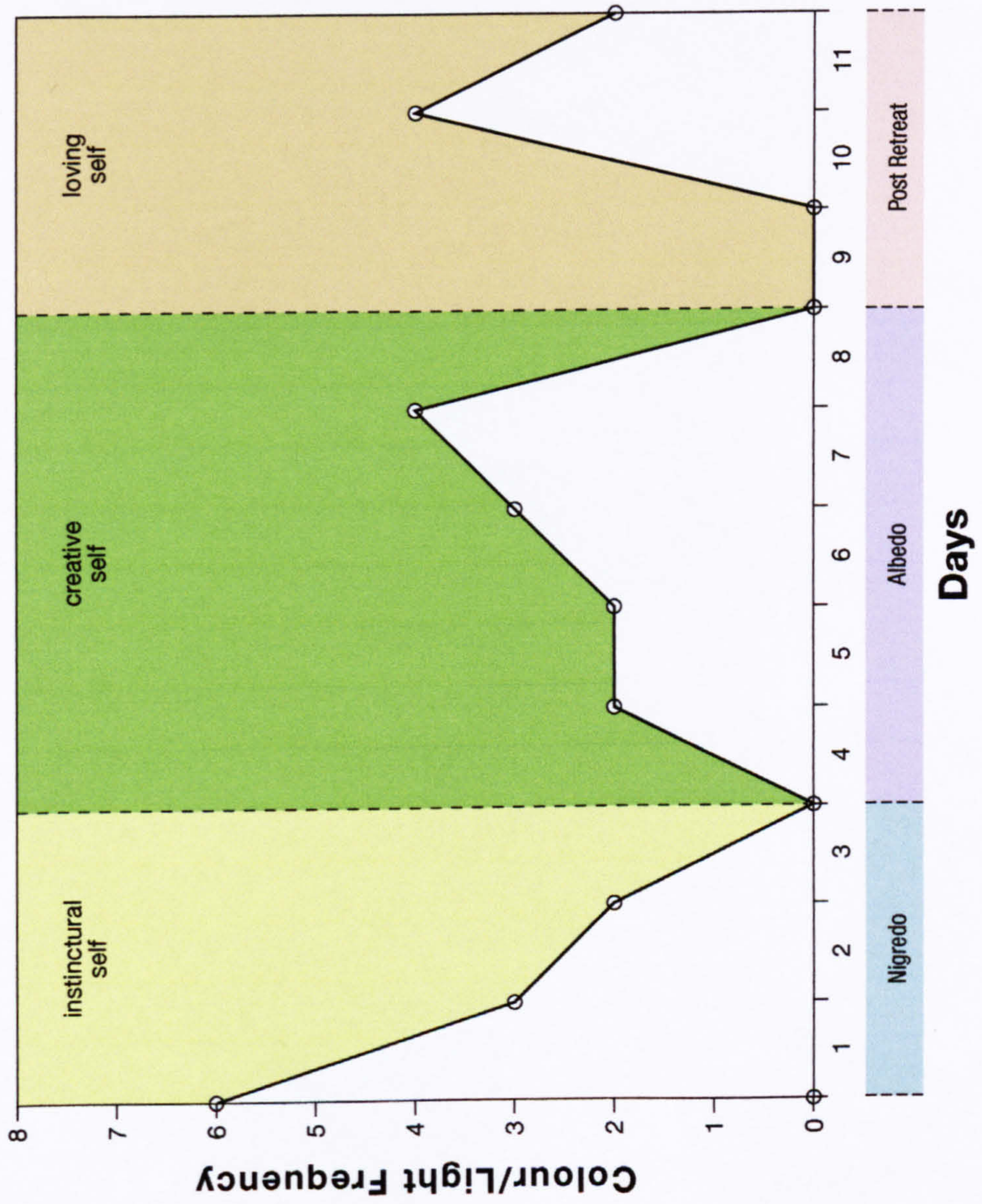
Graph 9: PW (vi) 19 days



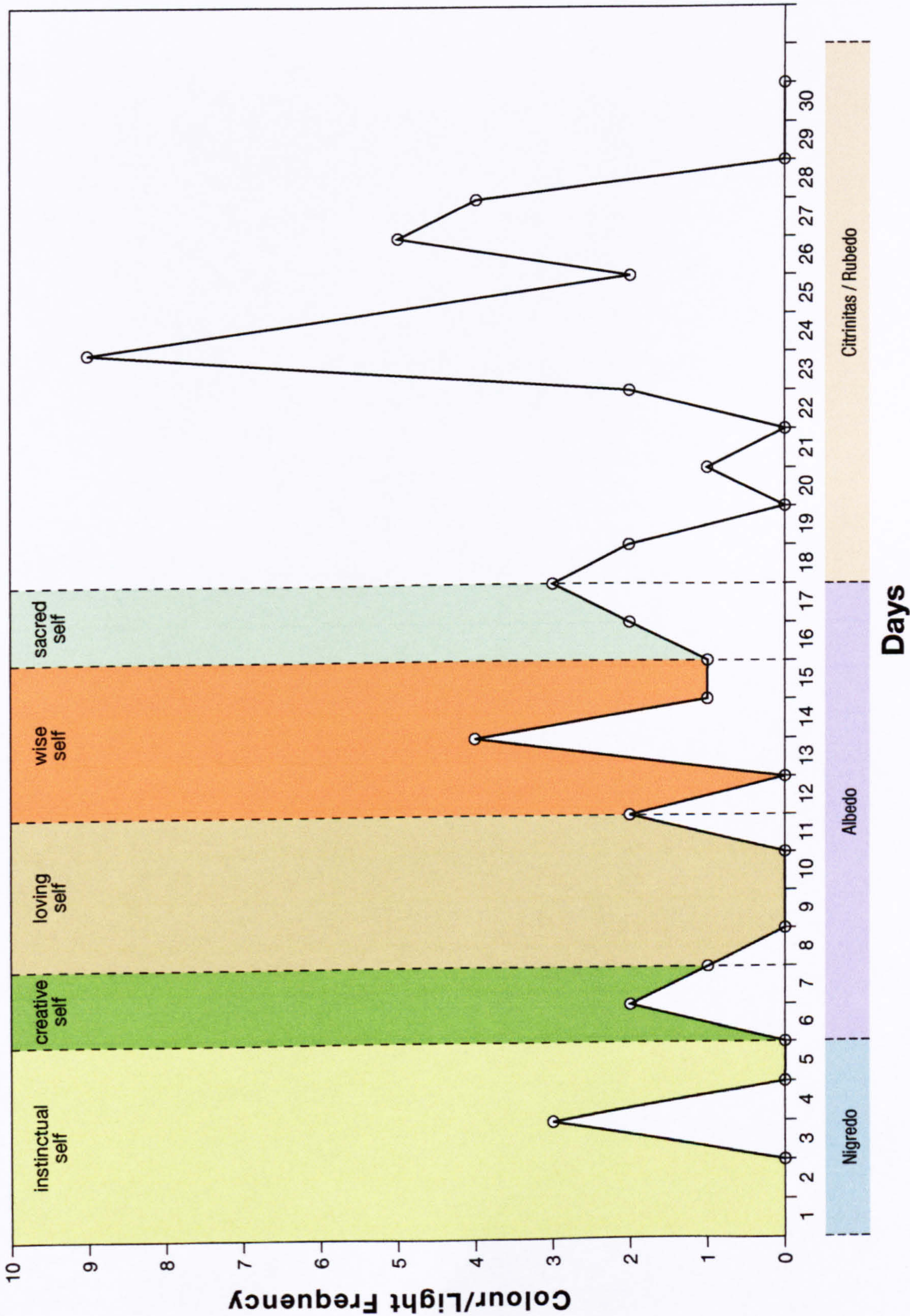
Graph 10: Si.L 9 days



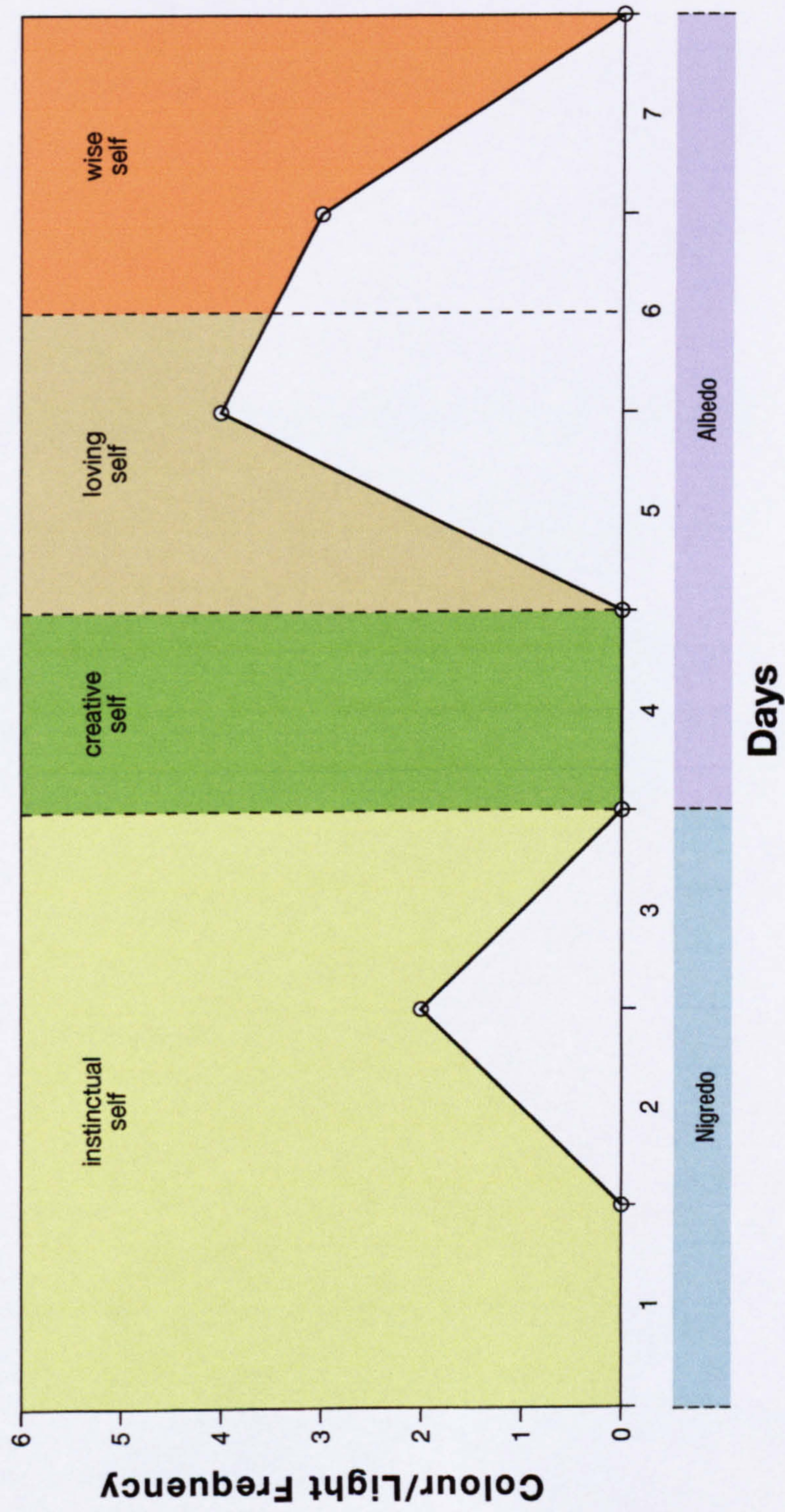
Graph 11: AL 8 days



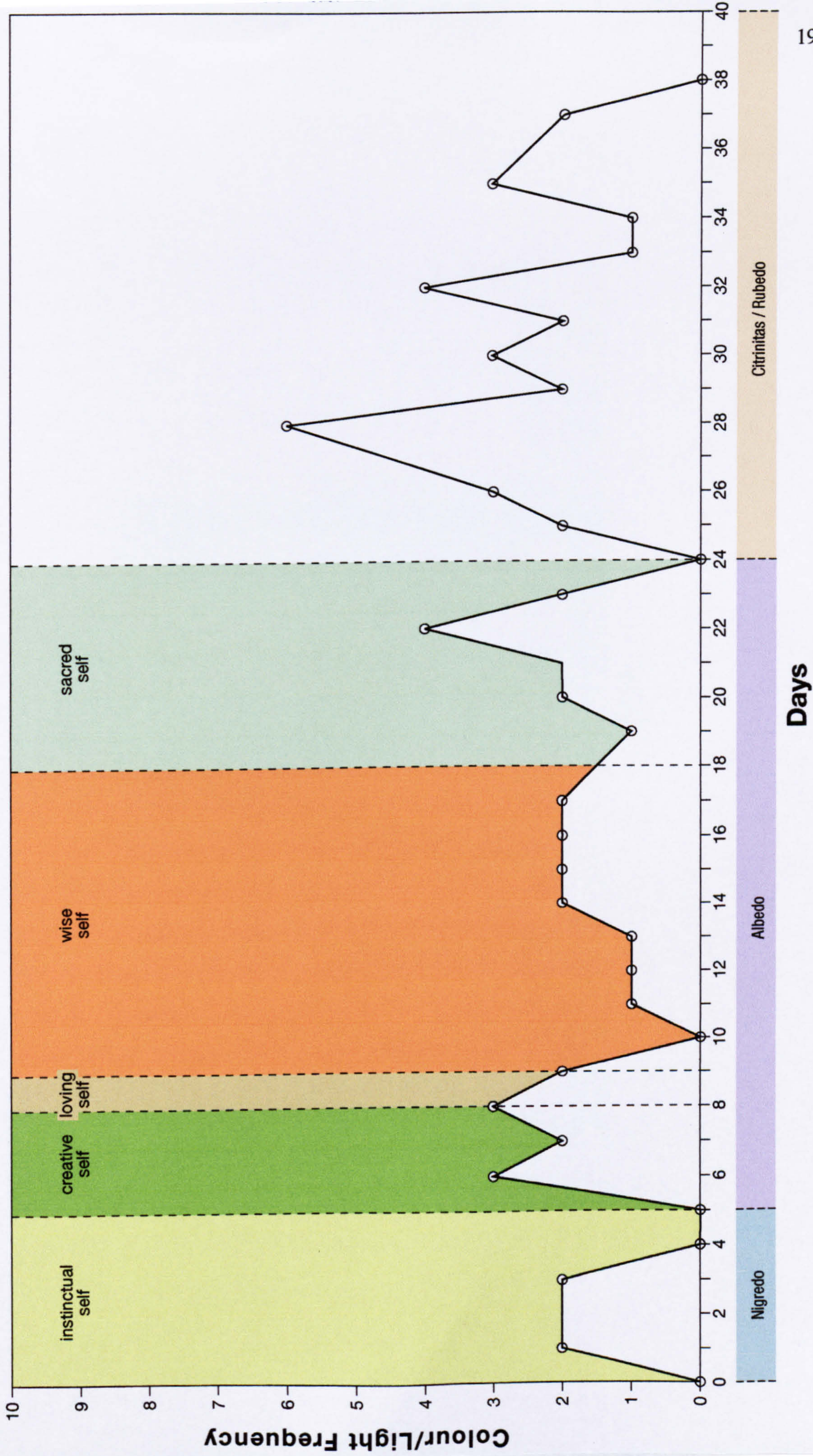
Graph 12: M 30 days



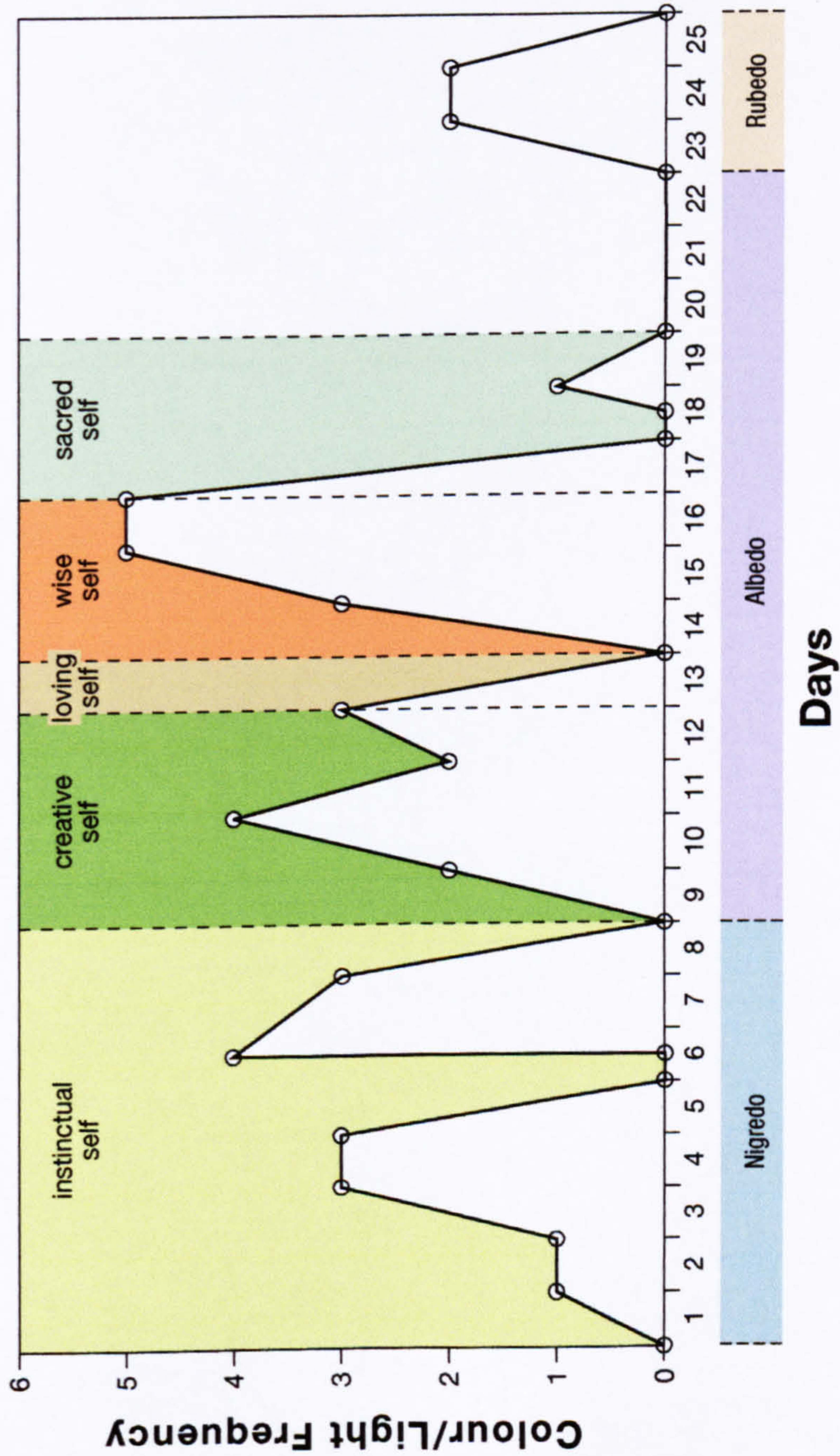
Graph 13: MH (ii) 7 days



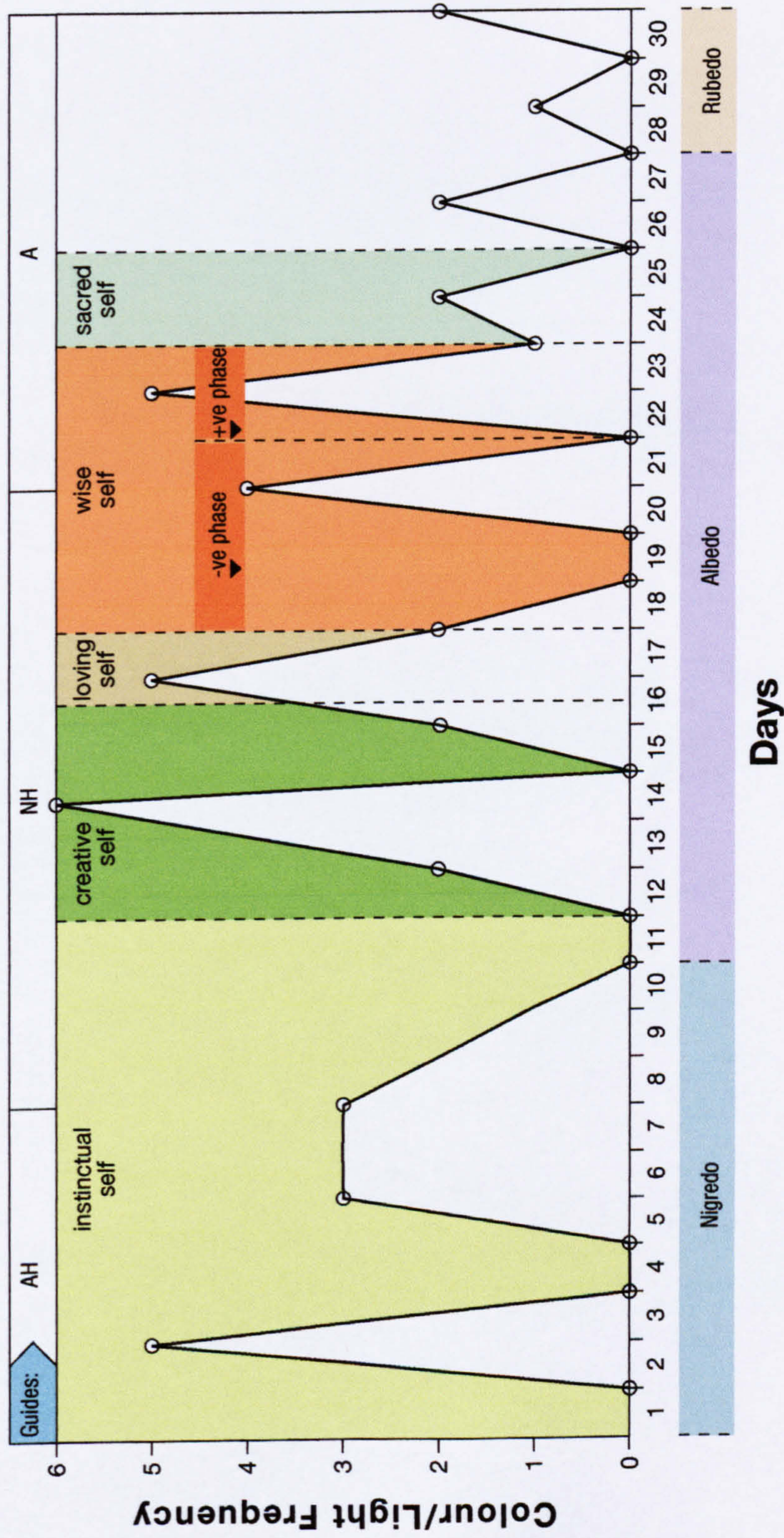
Graph 14: J (II) 40 days



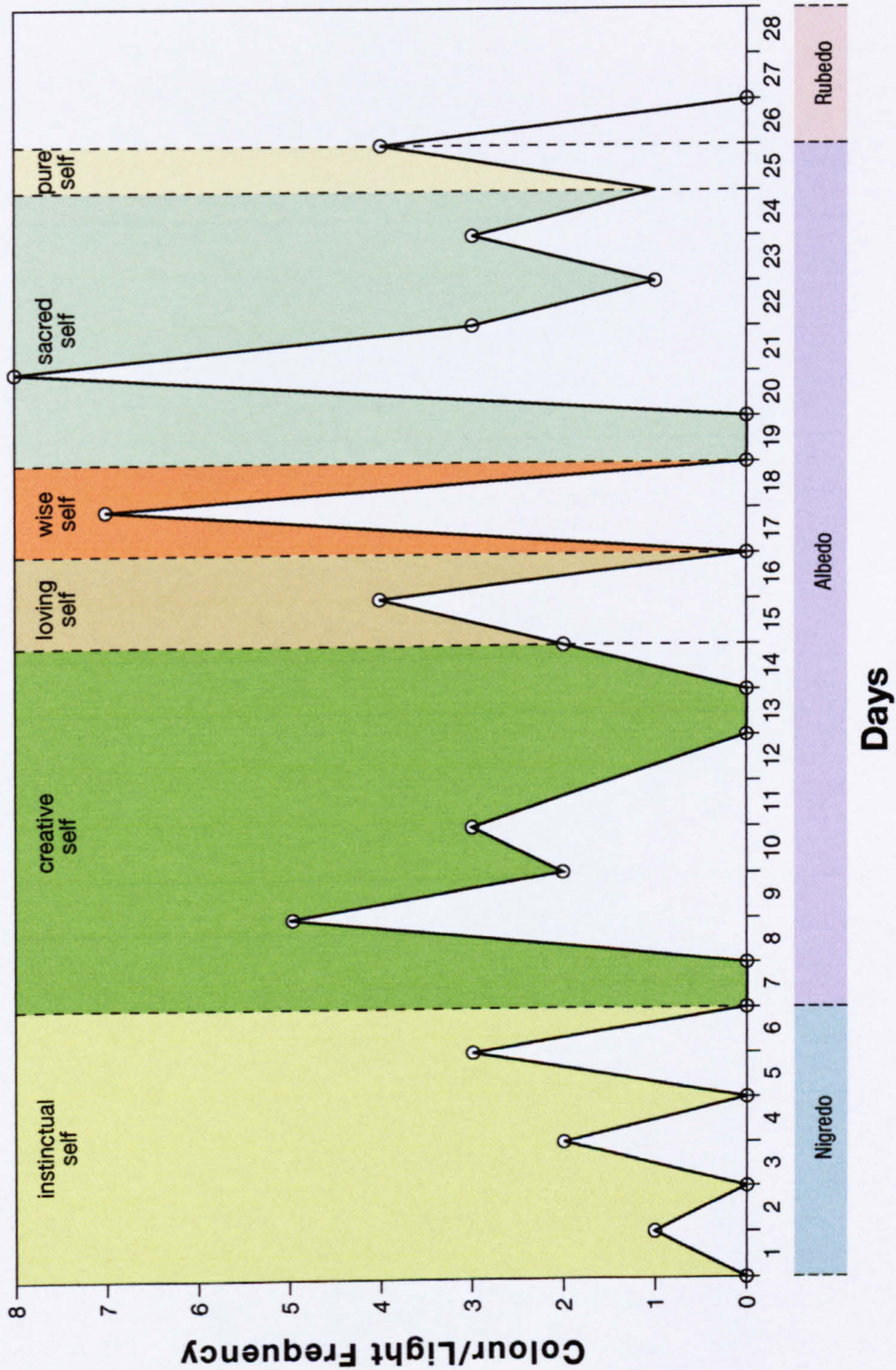
Graph 15: PW (ii) 25 days



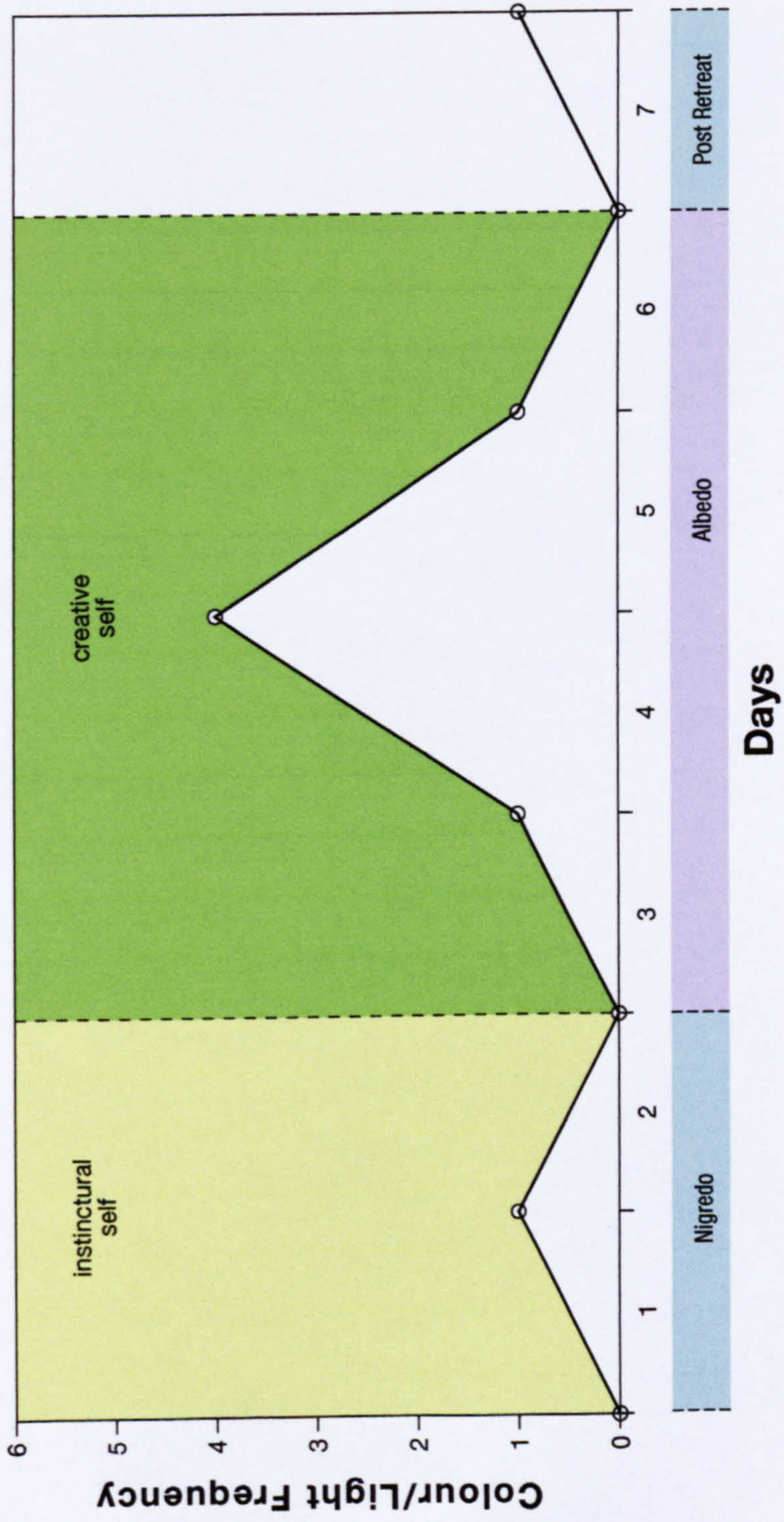
Graph 16: PW (V) Alps 30 days



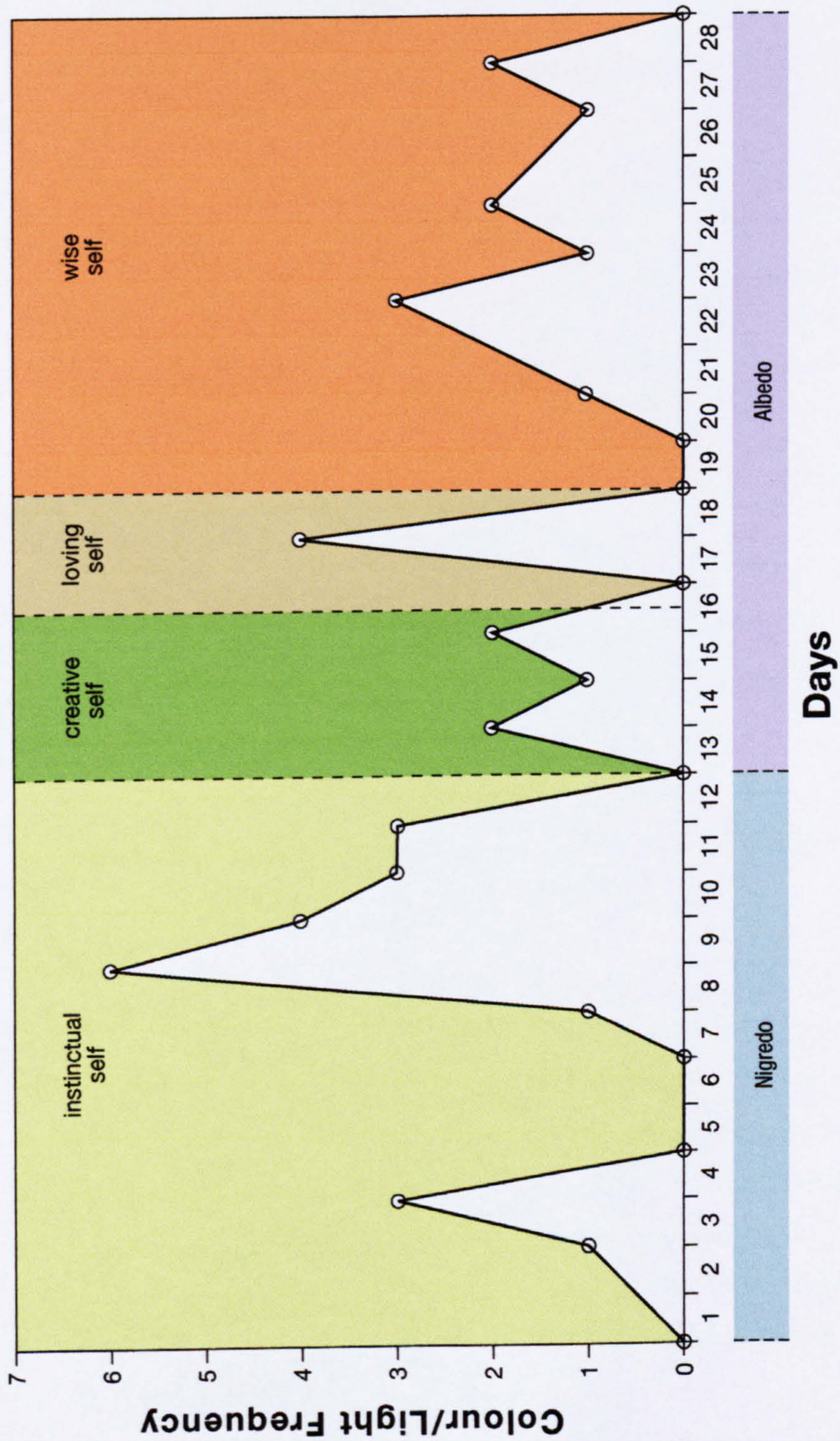
Graph 17: PW (iii) 28 days



Graph 18: K 6 days



Graph 19: J (i) 28 days



Summary of Graphs 1-19

The colour count analysis, expressed as a ratio of colour count versus time in graph form, seems to agree closely with the results of the thematic analysis, both in terms of the timing of the stages of the retreats and for the levels of self.

The retreats showed an increase in the colour count until a peak was reached, whereupon the colour count decreased until the end of the retreat. The peaks for each retreat varied with the higher colour count ranked retreats, showing peaks towards the end of the retreat. This seems consistent with the alchemical idea that as the psycho-spiritual transformation progresses, so more and more light emerges in the psyche. In the cases where retreatants repeated their retreats in subsequent years, the tendency was for the colour count peak to move towards the end of the retreat. Beginners or those struggling with their retreat, showed peaks near the beginning, i.e. either in the Instinctual self (Nigredo stage) or in the Creative self (mind). P.W.'s retreats, six in all, still showed this pattern of development in spite of a disastrous fourth retreat (P.W. (iv)). His series of retreats are discussed later following the comparison of the thematic analysis and the colour analysis.

5.2.3 Ranking of the degrees of the retreatant's transformation according to the colour count and the ranking of the degree of retreat experience

According to Jung, the appearance of colour and light in dreams, during a psycho-spiritual transformation, indicated not only that such a transformation was taking place, but that it also indicated the presence of spirit emerging into the consciousness of the psyche (Jung, 1968). This idea was confirmed in the dream texts wherein each retreat indicated an increase in colour and light as the transformation progressed. Accordingly, it was decided to make a comparison between the retreats so as to ascertain which retreats had recorded the most amount of colour/light appearances and which retreats had recorded the least. This would enable a relative ranking of the degrees of transformation to be established.

Each retreat was then ranked according to the number of times light/dark and colour appeared in the retreat, taking the length of the retreat into account. Thus a ratio of

colour count/time was calculated for each retreat. This analysis was further refined by then counting colours versus time during the Albedo/Citrinitas/Rubedo stages of the retreat only, the reason being that the transformation process only really gets under way when the Albedo phase starts and is concluded at the end of the Rubedo stage (Jung, 1968). The results are included in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.2 is a table ranking the amount of retreat experience and/or exposure to any Sufi teachings which might be pertinent to a spiritual retreat. Thus, N.L.(ii), ranked 19, Si.L. ranked 18, are the most experienced, whilst K., S.L. and A.L., ranked 3, 2 and 1 respectively, were the least experienced.

When Table 5.1, the colour count ranking, is compared with Table 5.2, the ranking of the order of retreatant's experience, it is clear that some of the least experienced retreatants had the highest colour count rankings, whilst other beginners or relative beginners scored poorly in the rankings. Conversely, some experienced retreatants did well and some did not, e.g. S.F., a relative beginner in experience, scored 6.5 in the colour count rankings and S.L., another beginner, scored 3.1. N.L.(i), an experienced retreatant, scored 3.8, whereas Si.L., an experienced retreatant, scored 1.8. At the bottom end of the colour count rankings, P.W.(iii) was moderately experienced, whilst K. and J.(i) were relative beginners.

The results of Table 5.1 and 5.2 do not suggest an obvious link between the two tables, and yet the question does arise of whether it is possible that the retreatants could have been influenced by their previous experience of retreats and of the Sufi philosophy - to the extent that experienced retreatants would undergo the 'psycho-spiritual transformation process' of the retreat more successfully than would beginners. Although the results of Tables 5.1 and 5.2 below do not indicate this it would seem that a readiness or 'aptitude' for such a transformation process could have been a far more important factor. Thus an investigation into the possible correlation between the two tables was carried out by calculating the correlation coefficient in section 5.2.4 below.

The other question as to whether the results showed any kind of order or progression in the retreat process can be addressed by observing a general progression in the

retreat process when the retreatants repeated their retreats again in subsequent years. This is discussed below in section 5.4 which deals with this question in more detail.

Table 5.1

Colour-Count Rankings

Rank	Retreatant	Year	Colour count	Period of Albedo to Rubedo	(Colour-count) ratio (Time)
19	S.F	1998	92	14 days	6.5
18	N.L.(i)	1999	38	10 days	3.8
17	S.L.	1998	31	10 days	3.1
16	R.J.(ii)	1999	21	7 days	3.0
15	V.	1998	41	15 days	2.7
14	S.	1998	74	35 days	2.1
13	P.W.(i)	1995	37	17 days	2.1
12	N.L.(ii)	1999	75	37 days	2.03
11	P.W.(vi)	2002	28	14 days	2.0
10	Si.L.	1997	11	6 days	1.8
9	A.L.	1998	11	6 days	1.8
8	M.	2001	43	24 days	1.79
7	M.H.(ii)	1999	7	4 days	1.75
6	J.(ii)	2000	59	34 days	1.74
5	P.W.(ii)	1996	29	17 days	1.71
4	P.W.(v)	1999	34	20 days	1.7
3	P.W.(iii)	1997	36	22 days	1.63
2	K.	1998	6	4 days	1.5
1	J.(i)	1998	19	14 days	1.35

Table 5.2

Ranking according to the Degree of Retreat Experience (approximate)

N.L. (ii)	19
Si.L.	18
N.L. (i)	17
S.	16
P.W. (vi)	15
P.W. (v)	14
J. (ii)	13
M.	12
V.	11
P.W. (iii)	10
J. (i)	9
P.W. (ii)	8
R.J. (ii)	7
S.F.	6
P.W. (i)	5
M.H. (ii)	4
K.	3
S.L.	2
A.L.	1

5.2.4 Calculation of the correlation coefficient

The ranking of retreatants' retreat experience (Table 5.2) and the ranking of the relative degree of transformation experienced in the retreat (Table 5.1) are both very different. Thus the correlation coefficient between the two sets of results was calculated to see if there was any link between retreat experience or the influence of the retreat vs. the degree of transformation.

The calculation is shown in appendix VII. The result showed that no relationship between the colour count ranking and the ranking of retreatants' experience of retreat was found.

Comments on the correlation coefficient

There does not appear to be a meaningful correlation between the two columns of numbers. However, allowance must be made for some degree of imprecision inherent in the data - for example in the retreatants' rendering and recording their dreams, errors in omission or memory can creep in. Secondly, in having to assess the rankings of retreat experience, allowance should be made for some errors. This assessment was based upon information gathered regarding each participant's retreat experience and length of exposure to Sufism. Other factors, such as psychological profiles, maturity of personality and interests, were not taken into account in the ranking of experience.

Even if an allowance for the relative inaccuracy in assessment is taken into account, the correlation coefficient would not significantly improve. After all, what is being tested is whether the results are being affected by the retreatant's previous retreat experience concerning their awareness of the subtle levels of self and the stages of the retreat process. It seems from this analysis that such an influence is not significant. However, it also seems unlikely that previous retreat experience and knowledge was completely irrelevant. Instead it is more likely that greater precision in the colour counting and ranking of retreat experience might have shown at least a small degree of correlation between the two tables.

The two columns of numbers referred to above, i.e. the colour count ranking and the retreat experience ranking, only included retreats in which the proper procedures and criteria for reliable data were adhered to. For example, four retreats out of the initial sample of twenty three (included in the thematic analysis) were not included in the colour count ranking and were therefore excluded from the calculation of correlation coefficient. The reasons for this were discussed in section 5.2.1:

5.2.5 The role of colour combinations in the dream images

The retreat dreams were also analysed in terms of the appearance of colour combinations in the dream images, which seemed to coincide with the combining of different qualities, fresh perspectives and when opposing aspects of the psyche were actually reconciled. Of the sample examined, three retreats stood out by showing the phenomenon of colour combinations in the dream texts, shown in Dream Data Sheets 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17 below.

Dream Data Sheet 5.15: M.

Day	Retreat stage/Level of self	Colour combinations
11	<u>Albedo</u> . Level of <u>Wise Self</u>	<i>I buy a <u>turquoise-red</u> jacket ... later there is a wedding.</i>
23	<u>Rubedo</u>	<i>Grapes shining in strong <u>red, orange and yellow</u> colours.</i>
26	<u>Rubedo</u>	<i>I see houses that are <u>yellow</u> with a lot of <u>green</u> plants.</i>
27	<u>Rubedo</u>	<i>I take a <u>yellow</u> melon with <u>green</u> points. A very long vegetable in fluorescent rainbow colours.</i>

In considering M.’s retreat, Day 11 coincides with the level of the Wise self and in the dream there are preparations for a wedding. This is significant because of the possibility of joining the opposites (a healthy inner masculine together with a healthy inner feminine). The purchase of a beautiful jacket also coincides with the wedding preparations later in the dream. It is of interest to note that the turquoise and red (colours of the jacket) are almost opposite colours in the colour spectrum, and that this

colour combination occurs within a dream initially marked as being the level of the Wise self, the level in which opposites are re-united.

In reviewing the dreams, opposite colours contained in an image or even in the same dream were unusual. They featured rarely in the dream texts. Colour combinations of similar colours (colours that are close to each other in the colour spectrum) occurred more frequently, indicating the ‘fruits’ of the inner process work. In a long retreat, M. recorded four instances of colour combinations of which one was a combination of opposite colours. Compared to the other two examples of retreatants experiencing colour combinations, M. was the only one of the three who was experiencing depressed feelings at the time of her retreat. These feelings disappeared however once the Albedo stage began. She had a significant personal relationship problem to work on and deal with. This would have ‘dampened’ the appearance of colours to some extent.

Dream Data Sheet 5.16: S.L.

Day	Retreat stage/Level of self	Colour combinations
3	<u>Albedo</u> . Level of <u>Sacred Self</u>	<u>Blue bells and pure white freesias.</u>
6	Level of <u>Sacred Self</u>	<u>Gold and blue peacock.</u>
7	Level of <u>Pure Self</u>	<u>White, black and gold triangles.</u>

Whilst blue and white, and gold and blue are relatively close colour combinations in the colour spectrum, white, black and gold are a combination of opposites or very different colours in the colour spectrum. Three colour combinations are present for S.L.

S.F. recorded seven instances of colour combination of which five contained opposite colours.

Dream Data Sheet 5.17: S.F.

Day	Retreat stage/Level of self	Colour combinations
4	<u>Albedo</u> . Level of <u>Wise Self</u>	<u>Black</u> boy vomits <u>white</u> tablets.
6	<u>Albedo</u> . Level of <u>Sacred Self</u>	(1) <u>Court</u> , place of splendour with <u>orange</u> , <u>gold</u> , <u>purple</u> and <u>green</u> . (2) A sacred space illuminated with candles in an <u>orange</u> , <u>red</u> light.
Day	Retreat stage/Level of self	Colour combinations
7	<u>Albedo</u> . Level of <u>Pure Self</u>	Lone <u>white</u> bird flying in a pale, <u>blue</u> sky towards the <u>white</u> light of the sun.
7	<u>Citrinitas</u>	(1) Nuns wore a <u>black</u> habit and a <u>white</u> dress underneath. (2) A tunnel of light with colours of <u>rose</u> , <u>violet</u> , <u>gold</u> and <u>white</u> .
8	<u>Citrinitas</u>	Dome of a cathedral filled with <u>purple</u> and <u>pink</u> light and little <u>red</u> dots. Then they become <u>white</u> and then <u>golden</u> .
9	<u>Citrinitas</u>	<u>Black</u> dots, <u>white</u> and <u>candy-coloured</u> dots.

This was the most significant retreat in terms of the amount of light and colour that appeared compared to all the other retreats in the sample. In addition, the ease with which S.F. entered the levels of self and the Citrinitas stage in a relatively short retreat and as a relative beginner stood out. She recorded seven instances of colour combination of which five were combinations of opposite colours.

Opposites combinations occurred on day 4 (wise self), day 7, day 8 and day 9 (all in Citrinitas). Day 6, day 7 and day 8 included colour combinations of colours close to each other in the colour spectrum.

S.L. and S.F. were the clearest in the psychological sense of all the retreatants. This may explain why they not only recorded the best retreats in the colour count but also in the number of colour combinations, considering they were short retreats. It is possible that had M. been clear in her self, psychologically speaking, then she may have recorded a higher number of colour combinations. To sum up, the appearance of colour combinations in the dream texts, particularly combinations of opposite colours, are significant indicators of the depth and degree of transformation.

5.2.6 A comparison of two different retreats using the thematic and colour count analysis

The analysis of two very different retreats is included below as an example of the joint use of the methods of the thematic analysis and the colour count analysis. The two retreats are then compared with a view to assessing their differences. The stages of Nigredo (instinctual forces encountered, mental conflicts, scripts, projections), Albedo (appearance of innocence, resolving of conflicts, flying, ascending, increasing appearance of light, colours), Citrinitas (disintegrating self, transcendental consciousness) and Rubedo (return to earth and worldly mind, sense of completing, descending) are identified in both retreats. Similarly, the levels of self are also discussed.

The analysis also serves to highlight the notion that a psycho-spiritual transformation process has its own timing and cannot be induced.

Analysis of S.F.'s Retreat

This retreat produced the clearest indication of levels of self out of the pool of retreats assessed. What is significant is that this retreatant was relatively inexperienced in retreat and had only recently begun to take an interest in Sufism. She had completed her first ten day retreat with the same guide eighteen months previously.

Interestingly, the Nigredo stage was the least obvious of the four alchemical stages. This contrasts with other retreatants who show the Nigredo stage very obviously at the start. However, the two clues that identify it appear (a) in the first dream of the retreat

when S.F. dialogues with her retreat guide in the laboratory (2 days before retreat) (see Appendix V). It is likely that, given the brevity of the Nigredo stage, S.F. was ready for such a powerful transformation experience, (b) S.F. was to rewrite the *Materia Medica* (she is a homeopath by profession) *‘in such a way that only the authentic, verified parts were kept’*. This, alchemically speaking, is the operation of *separatio*, which precedes the Albedo stage (day one of retreat).

S.F.’s personal diary indicates preparation for the Albedo. *‘I’m in the process of turning within’* and *‘towards the evening I started to feel elated and full of light’* (day two of retreat). On day three *‘my body shakes a bit’* - changes are being felt within the body, and *‘I felt the kundalini energy strongly. I had to give in to that and after that the shaking of the body stopped.’* This seems to be the turning point.

The dream of the third night of the retreat shows classic Loving self themes: Love, transparency, beauty, together with the appearance of green (in itself it is an indicator of the angelic/spirit aspect found in each subtle level of self). Alchemically speaking, green in nature, in a landscape or garden, is an indicator of the emergence (in one’s awareness) of spirit (Jung, 1983). It can also appear in a non-organic form, which is less, but not altogether insignificant.

Dreams on the fourth night show a distinct change in theme, with the themes of the struggles and distortions of the negative phase of the Wise self. The dark potential (black) will be transformed to white (by white medicinal tablets). It also speaks of transformation by death.

On night five, S.F.’s journal records negation through fears. *‘I fantasised I could murder someone.’* She wonders at this stage what is the point of the retreat and falls asleep exhausted. This proves to be another turning point in the retreat. It is quite usual for people to experience disillusionment during the negative phase of the Wise self - in which one struggles to find something authentic in one’s experience, something in yourself or in your experience that you can believe in. It is a test of faith.

In the morning of the sixth day the positive aspect of the Wise self is revealed. Now the themes of light, colours (orange, gold, purple, green) and (in her head) heavenly music is remembered.

During day six, the Sacred self is identified by four important themes found in template 5 (the level of the Sacred self), i.e. that of splendour (*'He led me to a kind of court, a place of splendour'*), treasure (*there was an atmosphere of celebration, generosity and spiritual wealth*), sacredness (*Virgin Mary, Melchizedek*), (*'I saw a monk', 'Greek temples'*), and majesty (*'I saw the magnificence and strength of that energy'*). In addition there is a further emphasis on the greenery in the dream of more heavenly music, as well as the brilliance of the light. (In Sufism this is called the light of splendour (Corbin, 1986).)

In her journal she records *'the sensation of a new birth.'* *'Immediately I saw a green plant pushing through cracks in the pavement. This was followed by a sensation of giving birth,'* and finally by images of the instinctual nature acting in an unusually tame and human way appear. Greenery continues to be emphasised and she also then dreams about being in a sacred space.

On the seventh day she writes *'I had never experienced the glory and beauty of life like this before.'* *'I felt the deep peace and stillness like after love-making.'* Again these are Sacred self themes.

On day six, she also experiences seeing a lone white bird flying. Whilst this is an ascending image it is also recognised in alchemy as an image heralding the ending of the Albedo stage (Edinger, 1991). In terms of the levels of self, it signifies several Pure self themes - white, immaculate, purity and detachment.

Between day seven and day ten, S.F. goes through the alchemical stage of Citrinitas - a stage in which the ego begins to disintegrate, opening up archetypal images/religious/impersonal images. Her journal describes intense experiences of light and transcendental/mystical experiences which defy categorisation and/or analysis. It is rare for a retreatant to experience this stage so clearly and powerfully, let alone for a relative beginner to realise this on retreat.

Rubedo begins on day eleven and gradually the personal sense of self and worldly images return.

A few weeks after her retreat, S.F. recorded four lucid dreams in one night. These are included with the retreat dreams as they are a clear sign of Jung's 'quaternity', a powerful symbol of individuation. The four dreams indicate a kind of profoundness that emerges from the completion of her inner journey. It has a global significance for her.

A brief description of the analysis of P.W.(v)'s 30 day retreat in the Swiss Alps

The researcher had been involved in guiding P.W. on Retreat during the years 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1999, whilst in 2002 he was guided by someone else. By the time the P.W.(v) text was examined, the researcher had already analysed the first four retreats and was therefore reasonably familiar with P.W.'s psychological themes and metaphors as well as the type of themes that usually came up with each subtle level of self.

In contrast therefore to S.F.'s retreat, the researcher chose P.W. and in particular his 1999 retreat as it is longer and involved three retreat guides. It also is a less spectacular example of a psycho-spiritual transformation process.

A woman began guiding him, the researcher took over between days nine and twenty-one, and finally, A., who guided P.W.'s 2002 retreat, guided P.W. between days twenty-two and thirty.

This retreat produced a few anomalies which were at first puzzling and required further re-reading of the text before any words could be committed to paper. As is shown in the Colour Frequency graph of his retreat (graph 16), there appears to be an overlap between the Creative self and the Loving self. In addition it is not clear (from the text) precisely which day the Loving self ended. However, it is clear (from the text) when the Nigredo, Albedo and Rubedo stages started and stopped. Finally, the Pure self was not marked, as it was evident from the text, although the graph suggests

it could lie between days twenty-five and twenty-seven. Apart from the above-mentioned ambiguities, the graph still shows the Nigredo stage, and the subtle levels of self in the Albedo stage also stand out clearly, corresponding more or less to the textual analysis of the themes.

Firstly, Nigredo is indicated by P.W.'s dreams of family and home right at the outset (day 1-3). Personal conflicts and mind-scripts are clearly present. On night two there is a death. Right through to night nine there is conflict and purification by fire (calcinatio) and water (solutio). Aggressive and sexual forces are encountered and mastered. On night five, sporting interests are present, though in terms of the Instinctual. The context is physical. At this point Nigredo begins to come to an end. On night six the themes of treasure and P.W.'s professional work background start to appear, heralding the beginnings of the Albedo stage. These are themes from the level of the Creative self. In fact, this is an overlap period where the Nigredo and Albedo themes alternate. On night seven P.W. is moving in Africa through an illuminated city. The three metaphors, Africa (representing Nigredo), illuminated and city (representing Albedo) appear together. On night eight a blue sperm whale appears and "*beaches*" itself violently on the shore. There is a suggestion it will be killed there. On night nine images of "*clearing the eaves*" of the attic and "*painting these white*" appear. At the same time he is told that the next project is "*to help butterflies*". Butterflies are a symbol of transformation (Jung, 1968) and indicate the possibility of flight. These dream themes from nights eight and nine strongly suggest that the Albedo stage is now developing.

From night ten onwards, which follows the '*whitening*' of P.W.'s attic and the butterflies (symbols of transformation and flying) on night nine, it is clear that this is definitely the Albedo stage, the beginning of the '*ascent*'. The dreams which follow on from night ten confirm this.

On night eleven the Instinctual is represented by a friendly dog (suggesting the instincts have been pacified) and on night twelve flying (ascending) begins. There is a dream of changing clothes (changing self) and nakedness (stripping away of defences (clothes)). The third dream indicates '*there is no more need to grow potatoes*' - an earthly underground crop. Instead green growing corn is shooting up

out of the earth. The appearance of green colours, even at this stage, is significant, indicating new life (Jung, 1983; Norbu, 1998; Harris, 1981). On night thirteen, '*magical little shop*' is a significant phrase - Jung indicated that magical things signify the appearance of the transcendental. Now, in alchemy, Sufism and in Buddhism (Edinger, 1995), the transcendental enables our consciousness to ascend through the subtle levels of self. More light/colour appears at this stage, confirming the increasing presence of the transcendental (Jung, 1968).

On night fifteen, P.W. goes '*up North*'. In visionary geography this means one goes to the place where ascent of this inner world continues (Corbin, 1969). The necessity for purification is emphasised. However, there is some ambiguity concerning the identification of the Creative self which arises in this dream when images of cathedrals appear (these normally would be identified as Sacred self images), although we are reminded that it is a metropolitan cathedral and that it is beautiful - this could also suggest beautiful architecture - a favourite theme of the Creative self! It should also be noted that P.W. came from a family with a strong church background and that this must have made an impact upon his psyche as a boy. Previously in P.W.'s retreat, images of cathedrals were shown around the level of the Sacred self. It seems here, therefore, that the image of the cathedral appears within the context of beautiful architecture - a Creative self theme, rather than the context of sacredness and religious ceremony, which are Sacred self themes. However, it also mentions a celebration outside the cathedral - and a celebration usually occurs when something has been completed/resolved in the level of the Creative self, or when something has been accomplished in the Wise self.

Following the celebration P.W.'s psychological projections of a personal rejection by the football team in this dream end. His murky inner mind-world dissolves when he re-enters the same nightclub and people look friendly. His negative attitude towards people has therefore changed. To sum up, the Creative self emerges around night eleven (ascending, flying, greenery) and continues until night fifteen when the themes of the Creative self, such as the mind world (attitudes), beautiful architecture, celebrations, talents and interests (soccer, bowls), are clearly present.

The number 4 appears in the dream of night fifteen - also indicating a stage of realising one aspect or stage of the philosopher's stone (Jung, 1968), the attainment of spiritual consciousness, or in Jung's terminology, that a significant step towards individuation has been achieved. However, the purification process still continues and P.W. ends the dream with a sense of unreality - this is not unsurprising given that he has left his familiar world behind. Moonlight is also present, confirming the Albedo stage.

On night sixteen, the Loving self is clearly identified by the themes of '*a fresh-faced young blonde girl - beautiful yet very ordinary/human*'. '*I'm with white-haired older men*' and the society '*Kultur in Krist*'. In going to Turkey, he comes across the Virgin Mary's house.

In the above phrases we find several Loving self themes - beauty, innocence, freshness, virginity. This is followed by guidance to switch on more light in the car he is travelling in. Finally the image of flight re-appears, suggesting another impending ascent.

Consequently night eighteen was marked as the beginning of the Wise self as it is preceded by spiritual references to Sufism and the appearance of red ink on night seventeen - red, orange are common Wise self colours. The negative phase of the Wise self begins on night eighteen - conflict, fear and police shooting, and there is a semi-coniunctio with his feminine figure as she reveals her naked top to him and her nipples are ornate. Further, the appearance of children's toys and children suggest innocence. A toy trumpet also relates to the archetypal idea in the Bible that the angels of fire and light - the Seraphim - announce themselves by trumpeting! (Bible, 1994).

On night nineteen, there is a dream about a sporting accomplishment, rowing. On night twenty, the image of a desert comes up. Now, in the Sufi tradition, as in other Western spiritual traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), the desert is the place of finding yourself, finding revelation - it represents an inner struggle for authenticity and discovering the truth of your own being (Corbin, 1969). In the dream of night twenty, once P.W. has dealt with his personal scripts around crime and punishment

and his rage around injustice (a Wise self theme), he then experiences the feminine as a balancing counterpart to his punishing masculine, worldly inner father. This leads to a kind of celebration through choir singing (a Sacred self theme). This dream therefore represents a turning point between the negative phase and its transformation into the positive phase of the Wise self.

Night twenty-two sees his father's house becoming a better place to be in. Here he encounters the '*descent of the Holy Spirit*', later he is digging for valuable ore - an alchemical phrase (Jung, 1968). These are Sacred self themes that are beginning to appear as he moves towards the end of his transit through the level of the Wise self.

Then there is a dream of the Olympics in Switzerland - leading to awards and accomplishments (Wise self theme) - an Olympian feat of overcoming the limited self. This differs from the sporting interests of night five which were tied in with his instinctual nature. The accomplishment leads to his friend smiling, and to awards of medals. The winner is high up and located on the Cross (a Wise self theme) - continuing the theme of Christ, which has been an important influence in P.W.'s life. Finally, his friend looks for the musicians amongst the stars - another transcendental reference, a Sacred self theme.

To sum up, the Wise self themes, which present themselves between nights eighteen and twenty-two, are of conflict, the trumpeting of Seraphim, sporting accomplishments, images of desert landscapes, justice and the celebration of the accomplishments. These accomplishments are disguised ways of showing what P.W. is overcoming his psychological blocks around the father figure injunction and the Church in the struggle to discover his authentic self - he goes through a kind of crucifixion, '*the winner of the medals at the Olympics in Switzerland (his retreat venue) is high up on the Cross*'.

The level of the Sacred self begins on night twenty-three with a sacred symbol - the Chinese/Tibetan seal. It is in a large circular encampment. Jung sees circles as mandalas, these being significant symbols of the emergence of the real self (Jung, 1968).

On night twenty-four, Atum, the name of an Egyptian priest, appears, symbolising a priestly/spiritual inspiration for P.W. In contrast to the dreams early on in retreat where P.W. had negative or indifferent encounters with people, he now not only has positive encounters with middle eastern men - traders - but they are pleased to see him - changing the negative self-image he shows in the earlier stages of retreat. He ends up dancing with them.

Night twenty-five seems to continue with the themes of the Sacred self, Atum, gardens and churches, and yet it does not have as strong a feeling of the Sacred self as night twenty-four. To sum up, the Sacred self themes of self-image, sacred symbol, priests, gardens, churches/temples are present between nights twenty-three and twenty-five.

Rubedo began on night twenty-six with re-embracing the self (in readiness for worldly life) and descending through the levels of self. Night twenty-eight continues with the Rubedo theme of rebirth, into this world, and further purification.

The comparative analysis of the above two retreats was undertaken after the thematic and colour count analysis had been carried out. It serves as an example of (a) how the analytical methods were used and (b) the significant differences that exist between the retreats despite the fact that the phases of the retreats and the subtle levels of self appear each time, showing the archetypal themes listed in templates 1-8.

Comments on identifying the subtle levels of self

Whilst there are different themes for different subtle levels of self, some themes also appear in more than one level of self. Specifically, themes commonly found in one level of self, eg cathedrals in P.W.'s dreams, usually appear in the level of the Sacred self along with the atmosphere of sacredness and holy men and women. In the 1999 retreat, he reports cathedrals in the level of the Creative self. However, the context of the cathedral image is altered by two words: the beauty and the architecture of the cathedrals. Thus the context is the Creative self - i.e. the beauty of the architecture, and not the Sacred self. However, the context in which the themes/images appear and the ways the image is used is significant. The example follows below.

Dream Data Sheet 5.18: P.W.(v)

"I'm in the town and opposite me is a huge and very beautiful metropolitan cathedral. It's western but with eastern touches. I'd seen it before in my walks in the country but now it's here - right smack bang in the middle of town. There's some sort of celebration going on outside the cathedral."

Similarly, sporting interests, expressed in the dreams on night five, must be seen in the light of the personal context in which they appear. Now to start with, an interest in a sport is related to a talent for that sport (a Creative self theme). However, accomplishing something through sports (a theme of the Wise self) actively is more akin to a personal accomplishment or, metaphorically speaking, overcoming something in yourself. In this case, therefore, a rugby game leads to chanting by Africans, which P.W. finds very moving. He spent many years in Africa and feels very attached to and fond of it. In fact, in every retreat he goes back 'home' to this root, which is being celebrated here on night five. By contrast, although he has a personal interest in and fondness for rugby, his own birth and roots in England are tinged with anger, sadness and bitterness. So in this context the interest in the rugby game expresses a positive earth connection or rooting in Africa with an emotionally familiar and favoured past. Thus chanting at the rugby game by Africans suggests a positive link to his Instinctual self, in which Africa is seen as an 'earthy basis' upon which to launch his ascent in Albedo.

However, the sporting accomplishments on nights nineteen and twenty-two relate to a struggle in overcoming forces in himself.

Several of the themes that usually appear in the level of the Sacred self appeared earlier briefly and less clearly in P.W.'s dreams in the level of the Instinctual self (in Nigredo), and were mixed in with the instincts, mental conflicts and life scripts.

Finally, there was a little overlap between the Creative self and Loving self. Overlaps are not uncommon in the retreat dream texts - and perhaps this should be expected, i.e. signs of the next level of subtle self may well appear towards the 'end' of the previous level of the subtle self.

To sum up, whilst the phenomenon of the images and the themes which appear in the dreams are important to pick out first in the phenomenological analysis, the next step is to re-read the dreams as though it was a narrative and take the context of the images and themes into account. This enables the reader to discern the meanings of the same images used in different contexts.

A brief comparison of S.F.’s and P.W.’s retreats

Although P.W.’s retreat is much longer (30 days) than S.’s (15 days), it does not show all the stages of retreat clearly - Citrinitas is merged with Rubedo - and the lines of demarcation between the levels of self are not clear (Creative self and Loving self, the start of the Wise self and Sacred self). The Pure self is not present at all. If we regard the colours/light/dark count as a guide to the presence and the intensity of spirit then again P.W.’s retreat reveals a far lesser degree of intensity in all the levels of self, when compared to S.F.’s retreat. This is illustrated in the data summary for both retreats in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Data summary for comparison of two retreats

	Retreat length	Year	Colour count	Colour count ratio
S.F.	15 days	1998	92	6.5
P.W.(v)	20 days	1999	34	1.7

In focussing on S.F.’s retreat, the Nigredo stage is relatively brief (2 days or approximately 13% of the total retreat time), whereas P.W.’s retreat shows the Nigredo stage lasting for 10 days (half of total retreat time). Although there is little differentiation between the Sacred self and Pure self in S.F.’s retreat, when the colour count is examined (graph 1), the subtle levels of self are much clearer in her dream texts than the themes in other dream texts (Sacred self is on day six, Pure self is on day seven). Even if we allow for some of the differences in circumstances - P.W. had three people guide him versus one for S.F. - the differences between the two retreats are considerable. The 1999 retreat, his fifth, was a typical example of P.W.’s retreats,

whereas for S.F. it was her second retreat. Further, P.W., by the start of 1999, had accumulated considerably more retreat experience than S.F. (112 days compared with S.F.'s 10 days) and had been attending the Sufi camps in the Alps for several years - S.F. had only recently begun studying Sufism when she began her second retreat. When it came to the presence of colour/light in the retreat, S.F. recorded a colour count ratio of 6.5 as compared to 1.7 for P.W. Lastly, P.W.(v) was longer in time than S.F.'s retreat. Given these differences, which appear to favour P.W. by way of retreat length and experience, it is interesting to note that S.F. responded far more readily to the retreat and recorded a far more profound and clear experience of the subtle levels of self. It would seem therefore that S.F. was ready for such a psycho-spiritual transformation experience and was possibly far less defended against the emergence of the spiritual energies than P.W. was. 'There is a time for everything and everyone to awaken.' (Khan, 1988).

The above comparison gives credence to the idea that the psycho-spiritual transformation experience depends more on the readiness of the aspirant than on retreat training, preparation, education, or experience. It also reveals that the more profound the psycho-spiritual experience (measured roughly by the colour count ratio), the clearer are the subtle levels of self.

Washburn (1988) speaks of a time in one's life when the transpersonal, which was initially suppressed because of the need to develop the ego first (so as to relate to the outer world), emerges back or breaks through again into the personal consciousness, which is now stable enough to cope with the emergence of the inner transpersonal realms.

If Washburn is right, it would give further credence to the idea of an underlying structure of the subtle levels of self which are experienced more consciously during a period of psycho-spiritual transformation. Such a profound experience will occur when the person has reached a stage in their psycho-spiritual development when they are ready to access this underlying structure, i.e. their consciousness can 'resonate' with the subtle levels of self.

5.3 Are the results of the analysis random?

Following the results of the thematic analysis, the colour count analysis and the calculation of the correlation coefficient, a further analysis was undertaken so as to ascertain whether the results of the thematic analysis were random or not. The idea was to develop a table ranking the retreats from the thematic analysis and compare it with the rankings from the colour count analysis. The results are shown in Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 below.

Initially, the number of retreatants selected for comparison and ranking in this further analysis, as shown in Tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 below, was reduced to twenty out of a total of twenty-three retreats that were recorded. One retreatant, H.1998, whose thematic analysis appears in appendix V, was excluded from the colour count ranking in Tables 5.1 and 5.7 because his dreams were recorded by the author, negligently omitting some of the colours which appeared in the dream data. However, the themes for the levels of self were clearly evident and so his data was able to be included in Tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6. The theme count for each level of self was included in this sample of 20 and is shown in these Tables below.

Three other retreatants were excluded from the tables because in one case the retreatant was in dispute with the guide (P.W.(iv)). The dispute, rather than being a transformation process, was reflected in the dreams. In two cases, the retreatants' use of imagery, whilst conscious, was mixed in with the dream imagery. This could have led to a subjective distortion of the data being recorded. Hence both cases are omitted (R.J.(i) and M.H.(i)).

5.3.1 Ranking the retreats according to the themes present in the dreams

Table 5.4 was constructed by re-examining the texts and counting the number of themes listed for each level of self in Albedo (rising), and in the Citrinitas (transcendent) and the Rubedo (re-birth) stages of the retreat. The numbers in brackets identify the listed themes in the templates. For example, S.F., the first listed retreatant, had three Creative self themes, listed as themes numbers 2, 1 and 7 respectively in Template 2. If the same theme was repeated, this was noted, but only

counted once. This is one way of using the thematic analysis as a rough means of assessing the psycho-spiritual transformation process experienced. The number of themes counted up for all three retreat phases was then divided by the time spent throughout the whole retreat (including Nigredo) to give a theme count ratio of transformational themes counted
retreat time.

This ratio is a rough measure of the degree of transformation during Albedo, Citrinitas and Rubedo stages, expressed in brackets in the left hand column of Table 5.4.

As each retreat was reviewed, the themes found in the templates (1-8) were noted, counted up and recorded for each level of self, as shown in Table 5.4. The number of criteria identified in each level of self were then counted up and recorded on the left-hand column of Table 5.4 in brackets. For example, S.F. recorded three themes (2, 1, 7) in template two for the Creative self. These themes (talents, clarity of dream and professional work) had already been marked in the thematic analysis as the Creative self. In all, 45 criteria were counted in S.F.'s dreams for the Albedo stage, the Citrinitas stage and the Rubedo stage. The number 45 was then divided by the number of days expended in the retreat, which in S.F.'s case, was 15 days. This resulted in a ratio of 3.0. This ratio is intended to be an expression or measure of the retreatant's relative success in the retreat.

On examination, the retreats on the first page of Table 5.4, S.F. to N.L.(ii) showed the presence of several criteria from the Sacred self through Citrinitas, whereas the other two pages showing P.W.(v) to H. showed a relative absence of criteria for the Sacred self through to Citrinitas. However, the problem with Table 5.4 was that if the theme count ratio/retreat were to be ranked, it clearly would not correspond with the colour count ranking in Table 5.1, i.e. if a ranking of the retreats in terms of theme count/retreat was tabulated from Table 5.4, it would look very different to the ranking in Table 5.1.

Table 5.4 was then retabulated by ranking the retreats according to the theme count ratio/unit time, as shown in Table 5.5. Even so, the comparison between the results of Tables 5.1 and 5.5 only indicates a loose correlation between the thematic and colour

analyses. Table 5.4 was then further analysed to provide a more accurate comparison between the theme count ratio and the colour count ratio. This can be found in Table 5.7 below (see page 235).

Table 5.5 also shows six retreatants, R.J.(ii), V., Si.L., A.L., M.H.(ii) and K., as having some of the themes listed in the subtle levels of self in Albedo, marked with an asterisk. This indicates that these levels of self were either present in the dreams one or two days after the retreat or they were considered to be implicit but not clearly present. None of these themes listed were present in the dreams during the retreat and were therefore not counted. However, if this data were to be included, it would not change the rankings of the thematic analysis significantly. They were included for thoroughness' sake indicating that the retreat process sometimes carries on (for a few days) after the retreat has ended or as in the case of Si.L. is sensed by the guide, albeit not yet in the dreams.

However, a more detailed examination of Tables 5.4 and 5.5, drawn from the thematic analysis, showed that the short retreats, e.g. A.L. and K., experienced most of their retreat and recorded most of the listed themes in the Instinctive self and in the Creative self. Tables 5.4 and 5.5 also show that most of the short retreats registered a high theme count in the Creative self, e.g. R.J.(ii) registered eight out of a total of 14 for her retreat. Similarly, A.L. registered six out of a total of 6 for her retreat. This was counter-balanced by the fact that they did not register many themes in the more subtle levels of self during the Albedo stage, such as the Sacred self or the Pure self or in the Citrinitas stage. By contrast, the two exceptional short retreats, S.F. and S.L., and one long retreat, S., registered far more themes in the more subtle levels of self, e.g. S.F. registered three themes for the Creative self, four for the Loving self, six for the Wise self, thirteen for the Sacred self, three for the Pure self and eleven for the Citrinitas stage. S.L. registered two for the Creative self, two for the Loving self, six for the Wise self, one for the Sacred self, four for the Pure self and two for the Citrinitas stage. With the exception of S.F., this had the effect of raising the short retreats ranking in the theme count ratios in Table 5.5, compared with their ranking in Table 5.1, and of lowering the theme count ratios for the long retreats in Table 5.5, compared with Table 5.1.

Given that many of the short retreats registered had a relatively high theme count for a short retreat period in the grosser levels of self (e.g. Creative self), then naturally they will show a relatively high theme count ratio compared to the long retreats. Long
time

retreats suffer from the disadvantage that it is harder to access the more subtle levels of self (Sacred self, Pure self) and so a longer period of time is needed to access them. The short retreats of S.F. and S.L. were exceptional in that they accessed the subtler levels of self quite quickly. This explains the differences in the results between Tables 5.4 and 5.5 on the one hand, and Table 5.1 on the other.

In addition, if we take the number of themes counted for a stage or a level of self as an indicator of the amount of time that the retreatant spends in that stage or level, then it is apparent from Table 5.5 that the two retreatants, S.F. and S.L., experienced relatively less time in Nigredo and the Creative self, where they recorded fewer themes, compared to the other retreats. Conversely, they also experienced more time in the subtler levels (Loving self to Citrinitas) than the other retreats. These two retreatants also attained access to all six levels of the subtle self and to the Citrinitas stage. This would explain why S.F. and S.L. are ranked in the top two of Table 5.5. Seven out of the sample of retreatants did experience all four stages of the retreat process. When the Citrinitas and Rubedo stages are combined as one undifferentiated stage, then 16 retreatants experienced the three phases of Nigredo, Albedo and Citrinitas/Rubedo. Clearly, a more refined analysis was needed to separate out the findings for the short, intermediate and long retreats and thus enable a clear comparison between the thematic and quantitative analyses. This was completed and presented in Table 5.7 below.

5.3.2 Subtle levels of self and progress achieved by the retreatants in the transformation process

Table 5.6 below shows a similar trend to Table 5.4, i.e. the most successful retreats recorded most of the levels of self and completed all the phases of the retreat, whilst the least successful retreats achieved considerably less. Thus it does seem there is an

inherent order existing in the data, whichever method you choose to examine the data with.

Table 5.6 also shows the subtle levels of self achieved by the twenty retreatants selected for comparison in descending of ranking for the thematic analysis. Clearly there is a gradual reduction in the number of levels of self attained through the dreams in going from the top of the list to the bottom. It is interesting to note that two relative beginners in the retreat process, S.F. and S.L., lie in the top three. Two, A.L. and M.H.(ii), lie below the middle of the chart, and two, J.(i) and K., are at the bottom.

Two of the more experienced retreatants, S. and N.L.(i) and N.L.(ii), were high up in the rankings and yet P.W.(v), in his fifth retreat, was near the bottom. Si.L., an experienced retreatant, was in the middle of the rankings. Again this confirms the idea that the readiness for retreat and the openness and readiness to the psycho-spiritual transformation process is a far more important factor when accounting for the thematic analysis rankings than the amount of retreat experience. The same findings emerged from the quantitative analysis using the colour count rankings in section 5.2.3 above.

Finally, in looking at successive retreats there is also a general progression in the rankings of the theme count ratio.

Tables 5.5 and 5.6 were derived directly from the thematic analysis. Basically they show an inherent order in the rankings of the retreats as well as a meaningful progression in the retreatants' process, particularly when following it year after year.

5.3.3 Comparing the results of the thematic analysis with the colour count analysis

Following the analysis in section 5.3.1, Table 5.5 was further refined to create Table 5.7 below, by separating the data into long retreats, 30-40 days, intermediate retreats, 21-30 days, and short retreats, 6-15 days. The reason for this is that the short retreats do not require deep inner probing of the psyche (the two exceptions were S.F. and S.L. who achieved an unusual depth very quickly), whereas the intermediate retreats and long retreats go much deeper into the subtle levels of self. This is evident from the data in Table 5.5 where the long retreats (S., N.L.(ii) and J.(ii)) achieved access to the subtler levels of self and responded strongly in the Rubedo stage. In his 40 day retreat, J.(ii) accessed more subtle levels of self than in his first retreat J.(i), but was less experienced than S. and N.L.(ii).

However, in achieving access to these subtle levels, the long retreats required a longer time to become conscious of the subtle levels of self, i.e. for the themes of the subtler levels to show in the dreams through colours and through dream images. Indeed, the difference in going from short retreats to long retreats is not a linear process because the rate of appearance of colours in the dreams slows down as you progress to increasingly subtler levels of self. By lengthening the retreat, you progress further through the levels of self, but it takes longer to become conscious of their 'light'. S.F. and S.L. as beginners were two exceptions to this rule. N.L.(i) also progressed quickly in her short retreat, but she was a much more experienced retreatant. However, in her 40 day retreat, N.L.(ii) went deeper, but progressed more slowly. This shows in her low theme count ratio in Table 5.7. This could explain why N.L.(ii) recorded relatively less light (colours and light/dark counted up and divided by the length of the retreat) in her dreams than in her shorter retreat, i.e. N.L.(i), 14 days, had a higher colour count ranking than N.L.(ii), 40 days, even though the latter retreat went much deeper and went through the Rubedo phase, albeit not very consciously or "successfully".

This would also explain why in Table 5.5, the long retreats scored significantly lower in the theme count ratio rankings compared to most of the short retreats. However,

time

when the long retreats, the intermediate retreats and the short retreats are grouped separately, the theme count ratios are in good agreement with the colour count rankings.

Table 5.7 shows the rankings of the retreatants based on the theme count and the colour count, thereby enabling a direct comparison to be made between the two

methods of analysis. In each grouping, the colour count ranking was listed in the right hand column according to the placings found in Table 5.1, e.g. for the long retreats S. was ranked above N.L.(ii) and J.(i), according to Table 5.1. Thus S. was listed as having a colour count ranking of one (1st) in Table 5.7. The theme count ratios for each group are listed in the left-hand column and their corresponding theme count ranking appears in the middle column. Similarly, the same procedure was adopted for the colour count rankings in intermediate and short retreats. Although the intermediate length retreats show slightly greater variation in the rankings between the colour count and theme count rankings, the conclusion from this comparison is that both the qualitative thematic analysis and the quantitative method, the colour count analysis, are again in close agreement.

Thus, overall, there seems to be a good measure of agreement between the results of the qualitative and quantitative methods. The colour count analysis, expressed as a ratio of colour count versus time in graphic form, seems to agree closely with the results of the thematic analysis, both in terms of the timing of the stages of the retreats, and to a large extent it agrees with the rankings of the thematic analysis when colour count vs. time is ranked for each retreat, i.e. the levels of the self in the colour analysis also seem to occur at the same points as the thematic analysis - see Graphs 1 to 19 when analysed by both methods. In conclusion, the rankings of the degree of psycho-spiritual transformation (which were derived from the thematic analysis) in Tables 5.7, when compared with the colour count rankings (derived from the quantitative analysis) in Table 5.1, show a good agreement.

Now that the thematic and colour count analyses have been completed and compared, the analysis of successive retreats, influence of retreat length and the use of different retreat guides can be examined.

Table 5.4 - Number of criteria satisfied for each level of self

Theme count (Theme count ratio)	Creative Self	Loving Self	Wise Self	Sacred Self	Pure Self	Citrinitas	Rubedo
15 days S.F. 45 (3.0)	3 (2,1,7)	5 (1,2,4,2x5,6)	4 -ve (2,9,7,3) 2 +ve (2,2x11)	12: (5x9,10,6,8, 13,2,4,5, 2,3,11,1)	3 (1,2,5)	11: (1,2,3,4) (5,6,7,8) (9,10,11)	5 (12,4,5)
14 days N.L. (i) 24 (1.71)	6 (14,11,13,8, 7,2)	3 (2,1,3)	5 -ve (15,7,9,3,4) 4 +ve (12,13,6,1)	Mixture 5th (1,6) 2			4 (2,5,7,8)
12 days S.L. 21 (1.75)	2 (14,2x1)	2 (7,2)	4 -ve (7,9,3x1,5) 3 +ve (13,12,6)	1 (14)	4 (2x3,2,3x1, 5)	2 (13,10)	3 (4,8,16)
9 days R.J.(ii) 14 (1.56)	8 (4,5,14,16,3, 9,2,11)	1 (1)	4 +ve (9,1,12,4) 1 -ve (2)	—	2 (1,3) *	—	—
21 days V. 18 (0.86)	3 (16,8,9)	4 (1,4,6,3)	2 -ve (2x12, 9) 2 +ve (3,6)	3 (2,4,8)	2 (2x1 *, 2x3)	—	2 (1,3)
40 days S. 35 (0.88)	8 (2,12,5,14,9, 16,3,7)	3 (8,2,5)	6 -ve (5,1,14,10,2, 11) 4 +ve (4,12,3,7)	3 (6,8,12)	1 (5)	3 (13,14,3)	6 (6,9,8,3,1, 7)
25 days P.W. (i) 25 (1.0)	7 (2,1,2x3, 2x1,4,2x7, 10,16)	2 (1,3)	6 -ve (6,1,2,3,4,9) 3 +ve (11,9,12)	5 (3,9,1,4,6)	—	1 (10)	1 (9)
40 days N.L. (ii) 29 (0.7)	8 (2,3,7,11,4x 3,12,2x4,16)	3 (5x4,5,6)	5 -ve (11,1,10,5,7) 3 +ve (13,1,2)	4 (3,6,7,9)	1 (3)	—	5 (9,8,5,4,3)

Table 5.4 - Number of criteria satisfied for each plane continued

Theme count (Theme count ratio)	Creative Self	Loving Self	Wise Self	Sacred Self	Pure Self	Citrinitas	Rubedo
30 days P.W. (v) 25 (0.83)	7 (1,9,2,15,4, 3,14)	2 (1,3)	8 -ve (14,15,2,7,1 10,12,5) 3 +ve (9,13,6)	3 (3,5,6)	—	—	2 (1,2)
28 days J. (i) 19 (0.68)	6 (8,7,9,1,13, 14)	3 (3,8,1)	4 -ve (3,2,11,9) 5 +ve (3,15,9,13,1)	—	—	—	1 (5)
40 days J. (ii) 29 (0.72)	6 (8,7,9,1,13, 14)	3 (3,1,5)	7 -ve (1,12,5,2,9, 6,10) 3 +ve (1,12,5)	1 (5)	—	1 (3)	8 (1,6,7,3,8, 11,4,5)
26 days P.W. (ii) 21 (0.8)	6 (9,3,2,16,7, 14)	3 (1,3,2)	2 -ve (2,5) 4 +ve (12,2,9,13)	2 (7,13)	1 (2)	—	3 (7,6,3)
28 days P.W. (iii) 20 (0.71)	7 (13,4,2,9,16, 14,1)	2 (5,7)	3 -ve (9,14,2) 1 +ve (9)	5 (1,13,11, 7,4)	—	—	2 (3,1)
9 days Si.L. 10 (1.1)	4 (12,13,1,9)		2 -ve (4,3) 2 +ve (11,12)	2 (4,8) *	2 (4,5) *	—	2 (1,3)
8 days A.L. 6 (0.75)	6 (12,2x14,8, 4,16,5)	1 (1) **	2 (1,12) **	—	—	—	—
7 days M.H. 7 (1.0)	3 (1,14,6)	4 (8,1,3,6)	2 (14,9) *	—	—	—	—
6 days K. 5 (0.83)	5 (6,7,5,3,9)	—	2 (2,10) *	—	—	—	—

Table 5.4 - Number of criteria satisfied for each plane continued

Theme count (Theme count ratio)	Creative Self	Loving Self	Wise Self	Sacred Self	Pure Self	Citrinitas	Rubedo
20 days P.W. (vi) 22 (1.01)	5 (2x2, 7,11, 14,13)	2 (1,8)	3 -ve (9,15,11) 3 +ve (1,13,3)	4 (6,3,2x7, 9)	—	2 (5,1)	3 (8,3,2)
29 days M. 21 (0.72)	4 (4,11,7,3)	2 (1,3)	2 -ve (2,12) 4 +ve (13,12,7,5)	3 (8,5,14)	—	—	6 (1,7,4,8,10, 11)
14 days H. 14 (1.0)	2	4 (2,10,19,11)	3	1	—	—	4

* implicit themes in dreams but not very clear, therefore they are not counted
** these themes were present in dreams after the retreat and were therefore not counted

Table 5.5 - Number of criteria satisfied (from templates) for each subtle level of self

Retreatant	Theme count ratio	Creative self	Loving self	Wise self	Sacred self	Pure self	Citrinitas stage	Rubedo stage
		← Albedo stage →						
S.F.	3.00	3	4	6	13	3	11	5
S.L.	1.75	2	2	7	1	4	2	3
N.L.(i)	1.71	6	3	9	2			4
R.J.(ii)	1.56	8	1	5	-	2*	-	-
Si.L.	1.1	4	-	4	2*	2*	-	2
P.W.(vi)	1.01	5	2	6	4	-	2	3
P.W.(i)	1.00	7	2	9	5	-	1	1
H.	1.00	2	4	3	1	-	-	4
M.H.(ii)	1.00	3	4	2*	-	-	-	-
S.	0.88	8	3	10	3	1	3	6
V.	0.86	3	4	4	3	2/2*	-	2
K.	0.83	5	-	2*	-	-	-	-
P.W.(v)	0.83	7	2	11	3	-	-	2
P.W.(ii)	0.80	6	3	6	2	1	-	3
A.L.	0.75	6	1**	2**	-	-	-	-
N.L.(ii)	0.72	8	3	8	4	1	-	5
J.(ii)	0.72	6	3	10	1	-	1	8
M.	0.72	4	2	6	3	-	-	6
P.W.(iii)	0.71	7	2	4	5	-	-	2
J.(i)	0.68	6	3	9	-	-	-	1

* implicit themes in dreams but not very clear, therefore they are not counted
** these themes were present in dreams after the retreat and were therefore not counted

Table 5.6 - Retreatants : Levels of Self Reached

Level of self	Instinc-tual self	Creative self	Loving self	Wise self	Sacred self	Pure self	Citrinitas
S.F.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N.L. (i)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S.L.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
R.J.(ii)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)	
V.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N.L. (ii)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓)
P.W. (i)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
P.W. (vi)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Si.L.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
H.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
A.L.	✓	✓	✓ post-retreat	✓ post-retreat			
M.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
M.H.(ii)	✓	✓	✓	(✓)			
J. (ii)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
P.W. (ii)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
P.W.(v)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
P.W. (iii)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
K.	✓	✓					
J. (i)	✓	✓	✓	✓			

Key: (✓) = unconsciously present in theme

Table 5.7 - Theme count ranking and comparison of colour count vs. theme count ranking

<u>40 Day Retreats</u>				
<u>Retreatant</u>	<u>Theme count ratio</u>	<u>Theme count ranking</u>	<u>Colour count ranking</u>	
S.	0.88	1	1	
N.L. (ii)	0.72	2	2	
J. (ii)	0.72	3	3	
<u>21-30 Day Retreats</u>				
<u>Retreatant</u>	<u>Theme count ratio</u>	<u>Theme count ranking</u>	<u>Colour count ranking</u>	<u>Retreat length</u>
V.	0.86	3	1	(21 days)
P.W.(i)	1.00	2	2	(25 days)
P.W. (vi)	1.01	1	3	(20 days)
M.	0.72	6	4	(29 days)
P.W. (v)	0.83	4	5	(30 days)
J. (i)	0.68	8	6	(28 days)
P.W. (ii)	0.80	5	7	(26 days)
P.W. (iii)	0.71	7	8	(28 days)
<u>6-15 Day Retreats</u>				
<u>Retreatant</u>	<u>Theme count ratio</u>	<u>Theme count ranking</u>	<u>Colour count ranking</u>	<u>Retreat length</u>
S.F.	3.00	1	1	(15 days)
N.L. (i)	1.71	3	2	(14 days)
S.L.	1.75	2	3	(12 days)
R.J.(ii)	1.56	4	4	(9 days)
Si.L.	1.1	5	5	(9 days)
A.L.	0.75	9	7	(8 days)
M.H.(ii)	1.00	7	8	(7 days)
K.	0.83	8	9	(6 days)

5.4 Analysis of the successive retreats: P.W.(i) - (vi)

One retreatant, P.W., recorded a series of six retreats between 1995 and 2002. This provided an opportunity to examine more closely the progressive/retrogressive nature of the psycho-spiritual transformation process, particularly when it was being attempted by a participant who clearly struggled and yet who ultimately made slow, steady progress in their process. Secondly, this was the only retreatant who experienced more than one guide (in sequence during their retreat) in some of their retreats. Again, this provided an opportunity to see what effect the change of guide, as well as the relationship between the guide and the retreatant, had on the retreat.

The analysis of this series of retreats made use of both the thematic analysis and the colour analysis. A comparison of both analyses in the case of P.W.(i-vi) then enabled a more objective assessment of his progress to be made.

P.W.'s first retreat, P.W.(i), went well and the colour count ratio of 2.1 was ranked as his best retreat in the colour count rankings, Table 5.1. N.H. (the researcher) guided him for 17 days of the retreat and then another guide, Si.L., finished the last six days.

In P.W.(ii) he did not do quite as well, scoring 1.71 in the colour count ratio. This could be attributed to the fact that to start with he was expecting a natural progression on from his first retreat. However, given a personality that is somewhat intellectual, it is possible that this intellectual expectation acted as a barrier, preventing the replication of the first retreat's attitude of a relative openness to the retreat.

In 1997 P.W.(iii)'s colour count dropped further to 1.63. On this retreat, Si.L. guided him for the first 15 days and N.H. took over for the last 13 days. This was the reverse order of guides, compared to 1995. N.H. found P.W. rather flat and depressed when he took over. There may have been some dissonance between P.W. and Si.L., thereby accounting for a slightly 'under par' experience. However, the subtle levels of self still appeared quite clearly.

In 1998, P.W.(iv) was guided by Si.L. for the first 15 days and experienced a conflict with her. It is clear from his retreat diary and the dream experiences that P.W.'s

retreat was hampered by this experience. Mixed patterns of the themes appeared but nothing definite could be gleaned from the data regarding the subtle levels of self. The conflict seemed to cut him off from his inner process - both his journal notes and the dream texts showed signs of dissociation - getting caught up in a sort of spiritual fantasy. This subsided when the researcher took over but an undercurrent of fantasy persisted to the end of the retreat. This retreat was therefore discounted and not included in the colour analysis nor in the thematic analysis (which failed to differentiate out the levels of self clearly - themes seemed to be submerged under an overlay of mental conflict). Indeed, when the researcher took over, he noticed P.W. was in a self-absorbed inner state, somewhat 'cut off' from himself. This retreat was concluded by a third guide, A.D.

In 1999 P.W.(v) had a different combination of guides, A.H. (days 1-8), N.H. (days 9-21), A.D. (days 22-30). This was a more successful retreat with no conflict with any of the guides. P.W. recorded a colour count of 1.7 for this retreat - a drastic improvement upon the previous year, 1998 (1.0).

In 2002, P.W.(vi) had one guide, A.D., and recorded a good retreat. The colour count ratio was up to 2.03, a good improvement upon the last retreat in 1999 (1.7). If we count 1995, as a year in which P.W. was open to the process, he only really began to struggle with the limitations of his personality in 1996. Thus there has been a steady improvement (apart from 1998) from 1996 to 2002. This series of retreats was of interest because it showed that the stages and levels of self were still evident in spite of the use of different retreat guides in the same retreat. Although in such cases progress with the psycho-spiritual transformation is still apparent, if there is a lack of rapport, or conflict with the guide, then the process is seriously affected. This situation can be compared to that of the psychotherapy process, where the matching of the therapist to client is important.

5.5 The influence of the Retreat length

The length of retreat can be divided into three basic categories.

Short retreats

The short retreats last between four and fifteen days. There were eleven such retreats in the sample that was initially considered for analysis. Of these, seven were beginners or relative beginners and two were experienced retreatants. The remaining two (R.J.(i) and M.H.(i), did their first short retreats in 1998 (discarded from analysis because much of the images reported were from the waking state) and a follow-up nine day retreat in 1999 (included in the analysis), R.J.(ii) and M.H.(ii).

Table 5.7 shows a good agreement between the colour count and theme count ranks for each grouping. Overall, half the short retreats did well in the theme count and colour count rankings, and half did not. In Table 5.7, three of the short retreats were ranked in the lower half of the chart (A.L., M.H.(ii) and K.), and Si.L. was ranked in the middle. R.J.(ii) had her retreat ranked fourth in the chart where S.F. and S.L., both beginners, were ranked first and second respectively. One experienced retreatant, N.L.(i) was ranked third in the chart. N.L.(ii) and S.L. reversed ranking in the colour count.

Basically, the problem with short retreats is that it typically takes between four or six days to settle in to the retreat - turning within is the technical term - leaving only one or two days to experience something of the subtle levels of self. Thus, the majority of retreatants on short retreats do not have sufficient time to experience more than the archetypal themes of the first four levels of self before the retreat is over. Thus from Table 5.5 we see that, with the exception of S.F. and S.L., only three out of the seven short retreats went beyond the Creative and Loving selves in the Albedo stage of the retreat. The average figure for the theme count ratio for short retreats was 1.4. R.J.(ii), who had a successful second retreat, recorded a colour count ratio of 1.56 in Table 5.7. However, during her previous short retreat in 1998, R.J.(i) recorded a colour count ratio of 5.8. The latter figure was not included in the ranking of colour counts as the images were a mixture of active imagination and dream images. Thus

waking images of colour and light, which were part of her active imagination experience, rather than being a dream experience, accounted for the boosting of the colour count ratio to 5.8. Since the author guided R.J. on both retreats, and since the first retreat was not as profound as the second retreat, the latter figure was discarded, particularly as waking images in the retreats were not counted in the colour count. M.H.(i) was dropped from the analysis for the same reasons.

One experienced retreatant, Si.L., was ranked fifth in Table 5.7, which was surprising given her previous retreat experience. However, this is understandable, given the difficulties of a short retreat. By contrast, N.L.(I), another experienced retreatant, scored second from the top in the rankings. Both S.F. and S.L. were beginners and yet were ranked in the top three of Table 5.7.

In conclusion, short retreats are not as likely to produce a profound transformation experience unless the retreatant is ready for and open to the process.

Intermediate retreats

Intermediate retreats last between twenty-one and thirty days. There were nine such retreats in the study sample. One, P.W.(iv), was dropped from the analysis because of the unreliability of the data. Of the other eight, J.(i) was a relatively inexperienced retreatant whilst V. and M. were a little more experienced in the retreat process. One inexperienced retreatant, P.W.(i), scored well in the theme count and colour count rankings (Table 5.1). However, as each subsequent retreat was undertaken his theme count ratios dropped for a few years, although he recovered in P.W.(v), finally reaching his best theme count ratio in all his retreats in P.W.(vi). Overall the spread of these theme count ratios was considerably less in the intermediate results than in the short retreats. The average figure for the theme count ratio for intermediate retreats was 0.82.

Long retreats

Long retreats last between 30 and 40 days. Three people, S., N.L.(ii) and J.(ii), each undertook a 40 day retreat. However, the spread of theme count ratio was similar to

the intermediate retreats but small compared to the spread in the short retreats. Further, in looking at Table 5.5, it is evident to a certain extent that in the intermediate and to a greater extent in the long retreats that many more of the themes linked to the templates are likely to show up in the dreams. This implies that the longer the retreat, the more likely the retreatant is to become conscious of the archetypal themes of the levels of self, whereas in the short retreats, only the exceptional person who is ready for a profound transformation is likely to experience most of the archetypal themes. This would also account for the relatively small spread of figures in the theme count ratios for the long retreats as well as for the large spread of the figures for the theme count ratios for short retreats. The average theme count ratio was 0.77.

5.6 Use of Different Guides

The analysis examined the possible effect of having different guides for different retreats and whether this might have influenced the retreat process or not. Of the 23 retreats:

Table 5.8 Use of Different Guides

<u>N.H. guided</u>	<u>Others guided</u>	<u>N.H. and other guides</u>
12	6	5

Now in reviewing Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.7 and the dream texts, it appears that S.L. (N.H.), S.F. (A.M.), N.L. (A.S.) recorded the most successful retreats. The retreat guides are indicated in brackets. Secondly, of the retreats analysed in Table 5.6, the least successful retreats were J.(i) (N.H.), K. (A.S.) and P.W.(iii) (N.H. and others). These retreatants each had different amounts of retreat experience. M.H.(ii) (N.H.) recorded a much more successful second retreat than M.H.(i) (N.H.), as did R.J.(ii) (N.H.) in comparison to her first retreat (R.J.(i) N.H.).

Finally, P.W. retreats (i-vi), analysed in section 5.5 above, also indicated that the use of different retreat guides was not as significant as the relationship between the guide and the retreatant, which had a greater impact on the retreat process.

So in conclusion, the use of different guides did not significantly alter the outcome or experience of the retreat, although for one retreatant, P.W., the use of different retreat guides in the same retreat did slightly hamper the retreatant's process and yet the transformation process was still evident. This poses the question, if a retreatant has an extremely good rapport with the guide, would that enhance the process and experience? The evidence of P.W.(vi) indicates that a bad rapport blocks the process. However, it is not evident from the results that a good rapport with a guide will make a significant impact upon the transformation process, i.e. it may be good from the retreatant's point of view but it may not be enough to ensure a significant transformation experience. Furthermore, there was no discernible influence of the researcher on the results when comparing retreats he guided with retreats guided by other retreat guides. This is surprising for, if we look at the psychotherapy process, the relationship between client and therapist is crucial to the success of the therapy. Even then, the success of the therapy will depend upon the willingness and openness of the client to the therapeutic process. Similarly, the transformation process on retreat is not solely dependent upon the guide (provided there was no conflict between the guide and the retreatant). This suggests that, provided there is a reasonable rapport with the guide, the transformation process is relatively independent of the retreat guide. So, to sum up, whilst a conflict between the guide and the retreatant can have a negative effect, the stages of the transformation process and the levels of self accessed in the process were evident in spite of the fact that different guides were used in this study.

5.7 Summary of the Analysis of the Retreat Dreams

This analysis has involved three main tasks.

- a) A thematic analysis of the retreat dreams which revealed that the process consisted of four distinct stages. The analysis also revealed the existence of several subtle levels of consciousness or levels of self that the retreatants were able to experience during such a psycho-spiritual transformation. Archetypal themes found signifying each level of self have been listed together in the templates 1-8.

- b) A colour analysis, which involved the counting of the number of times colour, light and dark appeared in the retreat dreams, was carried out on each set of retreat dreams. Graphs of the colour count versus time have been produced clearly showing the stages of the process and the levels of self. The levels of self appear on the graphs very much like a frequency spectrum, with each level of self being highlighted as an identifiable peak in the graph, corresponding to a particular day or number of days during the retreat process.
- c) A comparison between the two sets of results from a) and b) above was made. The results indicated that both quantitative and qualitative methods seemed to be in good agreement. However, there were a few uncertainties as to the exact timing of the access to and exit from the levels of self in some of the retreats. In addition, there was some overlapping between the levels of self when the two methods were compared, i.e. in some cases the colour count versus time indicated a slightly different timing for a particular level of self or for a particular stage of the retreat process, when compared with the thematic analysis. This is to be expected as both these methods of analysis as well as the means of gathering and recording the information involve a degree of subjective judgement. It is also possible that the retreatant could have forgotten a crucial dream, or a significant aspect of a dream. Nevertheless, the general patterns are clear enough to show the presence of a pattern of stages of the retreat process and the levels of self encountered.

In addition, age, gender and cultural factors (although the influence of culture was seen in the use of imagery in the dreams) or the use of different guides did not have much impact on the results of the analysis. However, the readiness of the retreatant for a psycho-spiritual transformation was clearly the most significant factor. Whilst longer retreat periods allowed greater access to the more subtle levels of self, and for the completion of the four stages of the retreat, the same pattern of results was evident throughout the retreat dream texts, i.e. the presence of the stages of the process as well as the accessing of different levels of self as the retreats progressed. Visual images were found to be used by the psyche as effective metaphors, reflecting the changes taking place in the retreatants. The accessing of each level of self and each stage of the process was dependent upon the resolving of the psychological issues relating to

the level of self or stage of the process. The issues were mirrored in the visual images and dream themes. The direct influence of spiritual practices on the dream imagery and dream content was not apparent.

A method of measuring the degree of the psycho-spiritual transformation process, based on the principle of increasing presence of light, colour and dark during the process, emerged out of the colour count analysis, resulting in the ranking of the retreats from the least to the most transformative. No correlation was found between previous retreat experience and the rankings of the retreats. Colour combinations, which appeared in the dream images, were found to signify the combining or synthesising of different or opposite aspects within the psyche.

The final question, as to whether the general pattern of the results of a) and b) seem to be in agreement with the ideas concerning the appearance of dreams during the transformation process, as expressed in both the Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist literature on dreams has yet to be explored. However, Jung's excellent summary of the stages of the psycho-spiritual transformation process (Jung, 1968), known as the alchemical transformation process, seems to be validated by the results of this enquiry. The comparison of the research results with the available literature on the subject will therefore be pursued later in the discussion section.

Having completed the analysis of retreat dreams, the research study proceeded to look at the role of dreams during the process of a psycho-spiritual transformation process, off-retreat. Two long term cases were chosen, one from the research studies of Carl Jung (1968) in the early 1930s, and one that volunteered her dreams over an extended period of time.

CHAPTER 6

Analysis of Dream Cycles in U.'s dream process: Cycles 1 & 2

6.0 Introduction

A dream cycle is a collection of transformative dreams that have been following the psycho-spiritual transformation process. Such a cycle can be part of a much larger natural transformation process in the human psyche involving several cycles of dreams, with each cycle incorporating a distinct change in consciousness.

What follows is the analysis of the dreams of a woman U. who underwent a profound psycho-spiritual transformation. In U.'s case, she recorded at least three cycles of dreams or at least three cycles of the transformation process. The first cycle involved only two stages, Nigredo and Albedo, the second and third cycles included all four stages in each cycle. The retreats, by contrast, involve the imposition of an artificial cycle of time, within which the retreatant still experiences a dream cycle involving the stages of the process as well as the experiences of several levels of self.

This was a long-term naturalistic case study which offered the opportunity to study one person's psycho-spiritual transformation process in-depth. By comparison, the spiritual retreats, although intense, were relatively short in duration. In addition, although U. submitted two hundred and thirty-five dreams she in fact recorded many more dreams over the two year period. The longest retreats were 40 days, and yet they typically recorded less than a hundred dreams per retreat.

U. presented her dreams to the researcher by telephone and email over a consistent period of two years. During this period she did not participate in psychotherapy or in any spiritual retreats. The analysis of her process revealed the presence of three alchemical cycles. Cycles 1 and 2 are analysed first, followed by Cycle 3.

Three dream cycles of transformation are identifiable in U.'s dream process. Cycle 1, which is relatively short, lasts approximately two months and recorded five dreams, from mid-November 1999 starting with a dream of death to the middle of January 2000 when it ends with a dream of a wedding. Nigredo and Albedo are the only two alchemical stages represented in Cycle 1. See appendix VIII.

Cycle 2, which lasts approximately eleven and a half months, has four alchemical stages. Nigredo starts on 29 January 2000 with a dream of purification. Albedo begins on 12 February 2000 with a dream of heading North, a re-orientation. It ends on 2 September 2000 with a dream of being at the top of a Swiss glacier. Citrinitas/Rubedo are not clearly differentiated out as two stages. They begin in Dream 2, 9 September 2000 and end on 8 January 2001 with the earthly dream of Africa. Although Citrinitas appears to be present through the two dreams on 10 and 13 September 2000, it should precede Rubedo, which began on 9 September 2000, if it is to be considered here as being distinct from Rubedo. Hence Citrinitas and Rubedo are taken together in Cycle 2. See Appendix VIII.

This cycle involved seventy-six dreams, of which one occurred in Nigredo, fifty-one in Albedo and twenty-four in Citrinitas/Rubedo. Clearly, then, in Cycle 2, the Albedo stage was the most significant, containing the largest number of dreams.

In Cycle 2 the main theme of the dreams was the continual balancing of the masculine and feminine, two seemingly opposed natures in U. Whilst colours were used in part in the dreams to depict this process of balancing, numbers and directions were also used in the imagery. Other themes such as the child, healing, treasure, flowers and clothing also contributed to the 'variations on a theme of balance'.

These themes and the dreams depicting the levels of self, as well as a colour analysis of Cycles 1 and 2, all follow below.

6.1 Colour Analysis of Cycles 1 and 2

A colour analysis of Cycles 1 and 2 was undertaken to test one of the fundamental ideas of the alchemical process, viz., that the further the aspirant progresses with the process, or in Jung's psychological terms the closer the aspirant comes to the conscious formation of the Self, the more conscious they become of the inner light of the soul and its colours. As Jung says (1968) "Light always refers to consciousness" (in alchemy, this means that the more light that appears through visions and dreams, the more conscious (of the Self) the aspirant is becoming) (Jung, 1968, 1983).

Details of the Colour Analysis

In determining the frequency of colour and light in the dreams, all colours were included as well as all references to light. Smiling, happiness and bliss were qualities that appeared along with the emergence of colours and light and the emergence of the transpersonal in the dreams.

It was also decided to count black as a colour since it seemed to symbolise the emergence of light or 'veiled light' from the unconscious side of the psyche. Hence black and white, colours, light and dark are all counted equally as light in its various forms.

Cycle 1 is quite short, lasting a few months, and acts as a preview of what is to follow in the subsequent cycles. It presents the theme of masculine and feminine, which starts off badly in the first dream of Cycle 1, in which a man is about to commit suicide, but by the end a happy marriage is taking place.

Cycle 1 is indicated in Graph 20. This Cycle consists only of the Nigredo stage (relatively short) and the Albedo stage, which shows the Creative self and Loving self as one undifferentiated level, and the level of the Wise self. No Citrinitas or Rubedo stages are apparent. The most important colour to appear was green, followed by blue, otherwise the colour analysis does not show anything significant.

Table 6.1: The appearance of colours in Cycle 1

<u>Stage of process: Nigredo</u>								
Colour	Yellow							
Frequency of appearance	2							
<u>Stage of process: Albedo</u>								
Colour	Light	Black & white	Blue	Pink	Gold	Green	Red	Total
Frequency of appearance	2	1	4	1	1	5	1	15

Total colour/light/dark frequency count for cycle 1 is 17.

Cycle 2

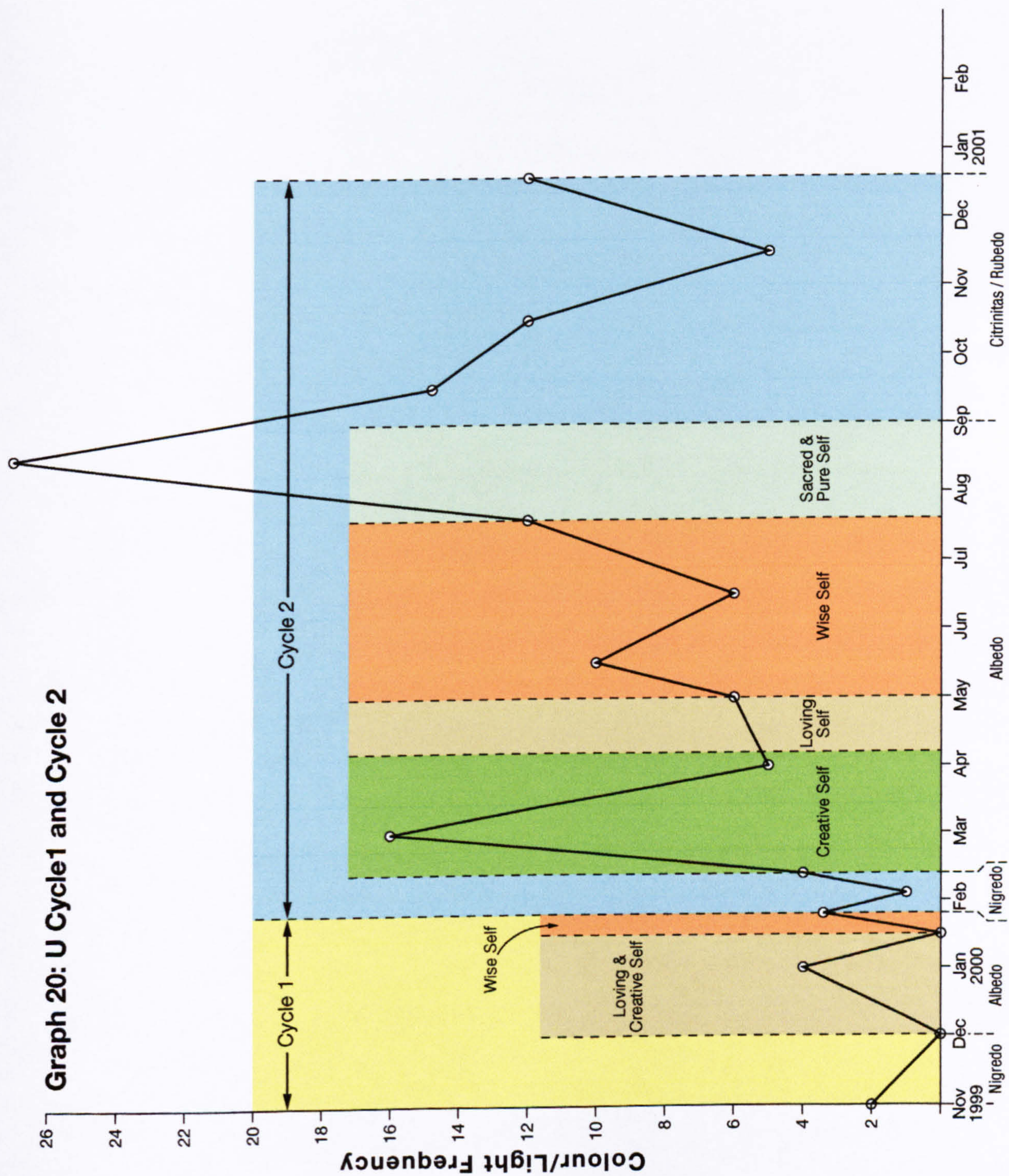
Cycle 2 is also indicated in Graph 20. The Cycle consists of a relatively short Nigredo stage, a much longer Albedo stage and a Citrinitas/Rubedo stage. In this Cycle not only is the Citrinitas/Rubedo stage shown, but the levels of self are more clearly differentiated than in Cycle 1, the most prominent being the Creative self and the Sacred and Pure selves (the latter two were not clearly differentiated out). In the colour analysis of Cycle 2 most of the colours appeared in Albedo. This is recorded and presented in graphic form in Graph 20. It clearly shows the importance and influence of the Albedo stage for the dreamer and her process.

The complete spectrum of colours, from red to purple, featured during Albedo. In addition, white, silver and gold appeared along with black and brown. The latter two colours often featured towards the end of each level of self as indicated by the “troughs” in Graph 20. Gold and silver (alchemically significant colours) and white featured most prominently in the Sacred and Pure selves and at the beginning of the Citrinitas/Rubedo stage (the descent). It is difficult to obtain a clear understanding of the patterns of appearance and change of colours during the process, but it was noted that far more colours appeared as the dreamer progressed towards the Sacred and Pure levels of self and this continued right through Rubedo. There were twenty-four Citrinitas/Rubedo dreams between September 2000 and January 2001 compared to

fifty-one Albedo dreams during the transit of the Creative, Loving and Wise selves (February to August 2000). The time span of both these is similar - approximately 5 months each.

The four classical stages of Nigredo, Albedo, Citrinitas and Rubedo are said to be designated by the colours, black and white, yellow and red respectively. To some extent this was evident from the texts, where Nigredo shows a relative absence of colours, compared to the other three stages. Albedo has the greatest number of colours appearing, with light and white being most prominent. Citrinitas/Rubedo has the second largest number of colours as well as a profusion of white, gold, red, blue and silver. Light was much less evident in this stage. Graph 20 shows the colour analysis of cycles 1 and 2.

Graph 20: U Cycle1 and Cycle 2



The detailed colour analysis of Cycle 2 follows:

The number of times the different colours appeared in the dreams shown for Nigredo and the combined Albedo/Citrinitas/Rubedo stages is shown in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2 Stage of process: Nigredo

Colour	Yellow
Frequency of appearance	2

Table 6.2 Stage of process: Albedo/Citrinitas/Rubedo

Colour	White	Gold	Light	Red/ rose	Blue	Silver	Black	Yellow
Number of appearances	35	22	18	16	12	7	7	3

Colour	Brown	Green	Pink	Purple	Grey	Black and white
Number of appearances	3	2	1	1	1	1

Total: 131 appearances of colour/light/dark in Cycle 2.

It is clear that the colour frequency ratio has gone up from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. This is calculated by counting up the number of colours appearing each month during the cycle, divided by the number of months of the cycle. Cycle 1 has 17 appearances of colour/light/dark divided by 2.25 months = colour frequency ratio of 7.5. Cycle 2 has 131 appearances of colour/light/dark divided by 11.5 months = colour frequency ratio of 11.3. An analysis of Albedo and Citrinitas/Rubedo for Cycle 2 is shown in Table 6.3 below. This shows the predominance of the Albedo stage in Cycle 2.

Table 6.3 Stage of process: Albedo: Total of colour/light appearances is 86

Colour	White	Light	Gold	Red/ Rose	Blue	Black	Silver	Yellow
Number of appearances	24	15	14	8	6	6	3	3

Colour	Brown	Green	Pink	Purple	Grey	Black & White
Number of appearances	2	2	1	0	1	1

Table 6.3: Stage of process: Citrinitas/Rubedo: Total of colour/light appearances is 43

Colour	White	Gold	Red	Blue	Silver	Light
Number of appearances	11	8	8	6	4	3

Colour	Yellow	Pink	Brown	Green	Black	Purple
Number of appearances	0	0	1	0	1	1

In looking at Table 6.3 in detail, the difference between Albedo and Citrinitas/Rubedo in Cycle 2 became clear. Firstly, white is predominant in Albedo, which is what is predicted (Albedo is the stage of whitening (Jung, 1968)) and the number of appearances of light are the next most frequent, again this is expected. Secondly, gold is counted third in order of appearance in Albedo. By contrast, although white is still the most prominent colour in Citrinitas/Rubedo, and gold is second, light is only ranked at 6th in order of appearance, whereas in Albedo it is second. Finally, both gold and silver appear both in Citrinitas/Rubedo as in Albedo. The conclusion upon reviewing Table 6.3 therefore is that the earthy colours like black, brown and yellow in Nigredo have become ‘transformed’ into light and white and perhaps ‘converted’ in the process to gold and silver in Albedo, Citrinitas and Rubedo. Furthermore, two of the eight appearances of gold in Citrinitas/Rubedo were in fact golden-brown and were counted as gold. One instance occurred during the dream of 27 November 2000 in the context of putting on a knitted woollen coat - “*I see myself dressed in a warm golden-brown woollen fabric.*” Clearly, the golden aspect or part of it has

materialised as clothing to wear. It follows that gold and silver, symbolising the masculine/feminine aspects of U., are ‘transpersonalised’ in her now, that is, they both carry the transcendent ‘spirit’ in them more clearly and they are in balance. In practical terms, U.’s feminine side was dominated by her intellect at the outset of the dream process. The computer-like mind and its intellect was in the past (before this transformation process began) to be preferred to the softer feeling and instinctual sides of her feminine nature. This very point is discussed in detail by Jung (1968) in his analysis of a client’s dream process, which is also analysed and presented for comparison in this thesis in Chapter 7. However, by the end of Cycle 2, U. felt that this imbalance had changed dramatically in her and that this was reflected in her personal life.

The combining of opposites, masculine and feminine in the psyche, as shown by the combining of colours in Cycle 2

As discussed earlier in Chapter 5, the appearance of colour combinations seemed to signify the coming together of polarised aspects of the self. Secondly, this only occurred in the exceptionally transformative retreats. Now in U.’s dream Cycle 2, during which a profound transformation of the balance between masculine and feminine took place, colour combinations also appear.

The colours red, brown, yellow, green, orange, blue, red, pink, white and turquoise appeared in Cycle 2 for the most part as singular colours. The exceptions, which were colour combinations, are listed in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4 - Cycle 2

Opposites	Colour combination	Date	Stage of process	Level of self
✓	Red-brown	20.4.00	Albedo	Creative self
	Black and white marble cube	26.5.00	Albedo	Wise self
	Yellow-orange-white	4.8.00	Albedo	Sacred self
	Red and gold	1.9.00	Albedo	Pure self
✓	Gold and silver	13.9.00	Citrinitas/Rubedo	
	Beige and red	13.10.00	Citrinitas/Rubedo	
	Gold and red	22.10.00	Citrinitas/Rubedo	
	Golden brown	27.11.00	Citrinitas/Rubedo	
✓	White and blue + white	10.12.00	Citrinitas/Rubedo	
	Heavy red sweater, under it light blue sweater	16.12.00	Citrinitas/Rubedo	

The colour combinations of red-brown, yellow-orange, red and gold, beige and red, golden-brown, and white and blue are combinations of colours that are quite close to each other, whereas gold and silver are almost opposites. Classically, gold and silver are considered complementary in alchemy, symbolising sun and moon together or masculine and feminine united. This is in accord with the basic finding of Cycle 2, the resolving of the oppositions between masculine and feminine. Finally, Table 6.4 shows that the majority of the combinations of opposites (opposite colours) occurs after the Citrinitas/Rubedo stage has begun, in which Citrinitas is said to symbolise the Royal Marriage of Sun and Moon and Rubedo is said to be the more worldly stage where Sun, Moon and earth finally combine, i.e. the marriage of all opposites in the psyche is grounded in the worldly personality. The final dreams of this Cycle show U. wearing a heavy red sweater and underneath a light-blue sweater (10.12.00). These are opposites in colour but they are still layered, i.e. layers on top and underneath - they are still in opposition and cannot be considered a resolution of opposites. They are however resolved in Cycle 3.

The appearance of black and white, which are opposites, through the image of the tall building in the shape of a black and white marble cube is in the middle of the cycle (26.5.00). This combination does not recur in Cycle 2, but re-appears in Cycle 3. Its

transcendental nature is only revealed at the end of Cycle 3, where the higher and lower energies of the psyche have been combined in a balanced way. Effectively then, gold and silver stand out as the only completed combinations of opposite colour in Cycle 2, representing the balance of masculine and feminine in U.'s psyche. The remaining combinations, of white and blue, red-brown and yellow-orange-white, are not clearly understood or readily explainable. Brown/beige in combination are grounding colours and white combined with colours seems to symbolise a purifying effect. However, these combinations, which represent opposing ends of the colour spectrum, white-blue on one end and red, brown, yellow, orange at the other end, are brought together in new ways in Cycle 3. In Cycle 2, a resolving of opposites, of masculine and feminine, gold and silver, sun and moon could be seen as a resolving of tensions in the horizontal axis of the psyche: masculine ⇌ feminine.

In Cycle 3, the analysis shows that there is a resolving of opposites in the vertical directions, above and below, top and bottom, higher and lower, through the imagery and particularly in the colour spectrum.

6.2 The themes of the Levels of Self in Cycle 2

Identification of the levels of self in terms of the dream process now follows. A summary of the themes and where they were identified is included. The Nigredo stage (Instinctual self) is identified first followed by Albedo and Citrinitas/Rubedo. A detailed analysis of each level of self is included in appendix VIII.

Dream Data Sheet 6.1: U. Cycle 2 - Nigredo

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Dream date</u>
<u>Struggling with the instinctual side (purification)</u>	<i>A very small furry animal, like a caterpillar, but with a thick fur, is crawling around. I want to ... throw it out of the door. I cannot catch it, it flies around ... it always escapes.</i> <i>In the corner, behind a plant, is a rather large sand heap full of ants. I pick up three shovels of sand and throw them out.</i>	29.1.2000

Dream Data Sheet 6.2: U. Cycle 2 - Creative self

<u>Dream Text</u>	<u>Date</u>
<i>Re-orientation to North</i>	12 Feb 2000
<i>Appearance of golden brocade</i>	13 Feb 2000
<i>Healing of headache</i>	14 Feb 2000
<i>Appearance of transcendental as 3 messages</i>	14 Feb 2000
<i>Baptism of child</i>	28 Feb
<i>Wedding and appearance of colours</i>	2nd dream 28 Feb
<i>Learning to fly</i>	5 March
<i>Meeting with famous man, Vaclav Havel</i>	13 March
<i>Celebrations and coniunctio in Creative self</i>	18 March
<i>Establishing of first quaternity (800,000 blue squares)</i>	19 March
<i>Metaphor of <u>invention</u> for implanting embryos</i>	27 March
<i>Writing talents - being urged to write</i>	7 April
<i>Talents - 'A famous pianist, she can play everything ... I admire her very much.</i>	17 April
<i>Hidden quality of surprise, humour - 'A funny trick, programming and playing piano - surprise!'</i>	17 April
<i>Skill in sport - a Boccia game: throw a flower pot on ice</i>	20 April
<i>Learning - niece studying to be doctor</i>	26 April
<u>Themes summary</u>	
<i>Flying</i>	
<i>Talents, interests, famous people, inventions</i>	
<i>Appearance of quaternity - something has been established</i>	
<i>Hidden surprise, humour, quixotic</i>	
<i>Learning in mind</i>	

Dream Data Sheet 6.3: U. Cycle 2 - Loving self

<u>Cycle 2: Loving Self</u>		
<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Dream Date</u>
<u>Nature/beauty</u>	<i>Evening gown hanging in garden</i>	Dream 2, 30 April 2000
<u>Light/beauty</u>	<i>Silky shining frills</i>	
	<i>Glistening, skirt, a gleaming embroidered top</i>	
	<i>Shining, narrow sleeves, a blue shawl</i>	
<u>Harmony/love</u>	<i>Students receive me with so much love</i>	3 May 2000
	<i>They are so happy I am back</i>	
	<i>This is warming my heart</i>	
	<i>I feel so surrounded by love</i>	

Below are listed the themes of the Wise self present in U.'s dreams on the left hand side. The corresponding dream images contained in the texts, and the corresponding dream dates, appear alongside the listed Wise self themes.

Dream Data Sheet 6.4: U. Cycle 2 - Wise self

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Dream Date</u>
<u>Conflict</u>	<i>My son has to <u>defend</u> his position against new children.</i>	5 May 2000
	<i>I get angry and shout.</i>	Dream 1, 26 May 2000
<u>Anger</u>		23 June 2000
	<i>Shaking both fists in powerless <u>rage</u>.</i>	
<u>Opposites</u>		
	<i>A very deep abyss ... 2 lakes in the Grand Canyon.</i>	23 June 2000
	<i>Two funnels - like abysses.</i>	31 May 2000
	<i>P. and I walking. Wild horse comes from opposite direction.</i>	17 June 2000
	<i>Two daughters: shouting: this is a good spot, this is a bad spot.</i>	8 July 2000
	<i>Two students have to go back, one East, one West. Left, right direction on train.</i>	Dream 2, 25 May 2000
<u>Danger</u>	<i>I see to my horror</i>	
	<i>I ask if it is dangerous: the woman says: very dangerous</i>	
	<i>This could be dangerous</i>	
<u>Faith</u>	<i>Place to worship in Z.</i>	8 May 2000
<u>No-man's land</u>	<i>Industrial no-man's land</i>	Dream 2, 14 May 2000
<u>(no identity)</u>		
<u>Quaternity</u>	<i>4 fellow students</i>	Dream 2, 26 May 2000
	<i>It looks like a cuboid</i>	Dream 1, 26 May 2000
	<i>Me: What is the cube? Bartender: it is the Self</i>	Reflection after 26 May 2000
	<i>Square bathroom</i>	17 June 2000
	<i>4 legs</i>	23 June 2000
<u>Coniunctio</u>	<i>U. and man on bed</i>	8 July 2000
<u>Incorporation of</u>	<i>Three students have to be sent home</i>	17 June 2000
<u>transcendental</u>		
<u>Incorporation of</u>	<i>She has a black animal with her, long like a snake,</i>	9 July 2000
<u>instinctual</u>	<i>but furry and with a head like a furry animal</i>	
	<i>Two figures with animal heads, U. is a princess</i>	22 July 2000

Dream Data Sheet 6.4: U. Cycle 2 - Wise self continued

<u>Gold/Sun</u>	<i>Handbag of pure shining gold, gold necklace</i>	15 July 2000
	<i>Golden lights</i>	6 June 2000
	<i>I travel towards moving light. Feeling of lightness</i>	26 May 2000
	<i>When Sun comes, stretch towards Sun</i>	8 May 2000
<u>Distortions/ Darkness</u>	<i>I wake up with burning rage: how could he be so stupid</i>	23 June 2000
	<i>Now she is afraid the witch wants to destroy it</i>	29 June 2000
	<i>Over there is a casino ... a Mafia boss is there</i>	22 July 2000
<u>Colour Red</u>	<i>Red hockey stick</i>	23 June 2000
	<i>Red revolving doors at entrance</i>	Dream 1, 26 May 2000

Dream Data Sheet 6.5: U. Cycle 2 - Sacred self

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Dream Date</u>
<u>Sovereignty</u>	<i>I love the Crown Prince</i>	29 July 2000
	<i>He has officially been enthroned as Crown Prince</i>	
<u>Treasure</u>	<i>I find silver cutlery and silverware</i>	29 July 2000
	<i>Entrance door has prayer in gold</i>	1 Sept 2000
<u>Religious</u>	<i>Singing St John's Passion [Bach]</i>	20 August 2000
	<i>I should pray. Every prayer removes something</i>	Dream 1, 28 Aug 2000
<u>Sacred</u>	<i>I see a document ... on wall, somehow sacred</i>	29 July 200
	<i>Medieval mysticism. "Bliss, Ananda."</i>	4 August 2000
	<i>Prays to make space</i>	28 August 2000
<u>Colour green/ Tree</u>	<i>Green encyclopaedia</i>	4 August 2000
	<i>I climb on top of a tree</i>	12 August 2000
<u>Transformation of instinctual</u>	<i>The golden elephant</i>	Dream re-entry, 2 Sept 2000
	<i>A grand hotel. Elephant sits on square mat</i>	15 September 2000
	<i>Circle of worshipping elephants</i>	

Dream Data Sheet 6.5: U. Cycle 2 - Pure self

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Dream Date</u>
Purity, innocence	<i>I see a glacier high up on the mountains, very steep, shining white. A child comes into the train.</i>	2 September 2000

The completion of cycle 2 occurs in Citrinitas/Rubedo. The themes are listed below.

Dream Data Sheet 6.7: U. Cycle 2 - Citrinitas/Rubedo

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text</u>	<u>Dream Date</u>
<u>Descent</u>	<i>I am standing on top of a hill ... then all ski together down.</i>	Dream 2, 10 Sept 2000
	<i>Descent.</i>	19 September 2000
	<i>I am at top window of house, looking down. At bottom is a lake.</i>	14 December 2000
	<i>In a luxury hotel, going down from one floor to other.</i>	22 November 2000
<u>Royal Alchemical Marriage of opposites expressed as gold/silver and sun/moon</u>	<i>A son gives a silver watch with a silver wristband, in shape of a waxing Moon. Dreamer (female) gives other watch, golden, round and a golden wristband.</i>	13 September 2000
<u>Colour Red in Rubedo</u>	<i>Both boxes are wrapped in red</i>	13 September 2000
	<i>I am wearing a golden ring with a big, red stone</i>	22 November 2000
<u>Balance of opposites</u>	<i>I am asked about my two parts. One is direct, singing, dancing, the second is structured, clear, reflecting. They represent feminine and masculine sides respectively.</i>	22 September 2000
<u>Return to earth life</u>	<i>Dressed in warm golden-brown woollen fabric. This gives me absolute security through its quality and beauty.</i>	27 November 2000
	<i>Paper he is writing on has been knitted, of thick white wool. A woman has knitted the minutes.</i>	16 December 2000
	<i>A cow gives birth to a baby in Africa. Baby dies.</i>	8 January 2001
<u>Coniunctio in Rubedo</u>	<i>This is my wedding.</i>	28 October 2000

6.3 Themes Present in Cycle 2

Introduction

A long-term naturalistic case study provides the opportunity to select, record and classify the dreamer's symbols over a significant period of time (Brush, 1993). Several themes presented in the text appeared repeatedly as significant symbols throughout this dream cycle, including the child, clothing, healing, flowers, coniunctio, treasure, directions and the numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5. Tracking these visual metaphors helped considerably in following the overarching theme of transformation. The visual metaphors of clothing and the coniunctio of each level of self (the coming together of the conscious side (of the dreamer) with each subtle level of self was symbolised by a different figure in the dreams). Treasure in particular could be tracked throughout the dream narrative of this cycle, clearly showing the changes in the dreamer's consciousness. The complete analysis of these metaphors appears in appendix VIII.

6.4 Summary of Analysis of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

Cycle 1 seemed to be a short, but illuminating introduction to the process of this transformation. It had the operations of death and purification, the resolving of opposites, the themes of masculine and feminine, and of treasure. Although the Creative self and Wise self appeared, Cycle 1 was not completed. During the Wise self a celebration occurs in which the opposites are resolved together, and in which the colour green becomes prominent. Cycle 2, however, which followed immediately after Cycle 1 was completed in the process.

Cycle 2 became a much longer, deeper process of transformation, unfolding through U.'s dreams. Indeed, the colour analysis showed the appearance of all the levels of self from the Creative self to the Pure self, whereas in Cycle 1 only the Creative and Wise selves were apparent.

The text provided ample material for images and phrases to be collected and grouped into themes for each level of self. Clearly the process of the unfoldment of the transpersonal side gathered momentum as the cycle proceeded until the Citrinitas/Rubedo stage when the process moved to its natural conclusion before moving on to the third cycle of dreams.

The main theme of these two cycles has been the balancing of the masculine and feminine in the dreamer. This is reflected in the colour analysis, and in the various themes of the child, healing, clothing, flowers, coniunctio, numbers, directions and treasure. Some of these themes were also used in the analysis to track the presence of the levels of self, specifically the themes of clothing, coniunctio, treasure and the use of numbers. For example when each successive level of self had emerged in the dreams, a specific type of clothing was worn by the dreamer, reflecting the colours or themes of that level of self. Cycle 3 is analysed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

Analysis of Cycle 3 of U.'s dream process

U. recorded a third cycle of dreams over an extended period of fifteen months. The content of these dreams was distinctly different to those of cycles one and two and yet the underlying process of four stages and the subtle levels of self were still clearly apparent. See appendix VIII.

7.1 A distinct shift in her dream consciousness

Cycle 3 also showed a distinct shift in U.'s consciousness in her dreams. The particular differences between cycles 2 and 3 are analysed below. However, one of the most important features of this shift was that throughout the cycle the themes of the Wise self were present in all the stages and in all the other levels of self, i.e. each level of self transited in cycle 3, from the very start to the completion of the cycle, showed the Wise self themes, e.g. in the Loving self, both Loving and Wise self themes were present. This phenomenon is explained in the discussion of the themes below. Secondly, there was a great increase in the presence of light and colour in the dreams.

Overview

Cycle 3 was quite different from cycles 1 and 2. It showed some distinct changes from the phenomena and themes of the previous cycles. In cycle 2, the main theme was of balancing the masculine and feminine energies, whereas in cycle 3 the emphasis changed to balancing the energies of the "higher selves" with the energies of the lower self, the Instinctual self. It was as though cycle 2 focused on the horizontal balance between left and right, masculine and feminine, sun and moon, whilst cycle 3 focused on balancing the spiritual and material in the vertical direction, as well as the masculine and feminine, in the horizontal direction. This suggests the image of the cross + as a symbol of overall balance, achieved through cycles 2 and 3. To confirm that this balance had been achieved, the symbols of black and white appeared, first as

two complementary disks (as in the Yin-Yang symbol) and finally, towards the end of the cycle, as a black whale and a white water animal swimming with U. together, in harmony, as though this balance has become animated in her. This latter image suggests a dynamic image of the Self (Jung, 1968).

In cycle 3, the appearance of colours and light showed a distinct increase throughout the cycle, compared to cycles 2 and 1. See tables 7.1 and 7.2. Table 7.3 analyses the colour spectrum. For instance, light appeared sixty-four times in cycle 3, as opposed to cycle 2 in which it appeared 18 times (see Table 6.2). In cycle one, light appeared twice in the dreams. White was the predominant colour in cycle 2, appearing 35 times, whereas it appeared 45 times in cycle 3. Thus there was a change in the order of appearance and frequency in this respect, between cycles 2 and 3. Black, red, blue and yellow had become much more prominent in cycle 3 than in cycle 2 and are linked to the balancing of the transcendental qualities/energies that seemed to have emerged in U.’s consciousness in cycle 3.

Table 7.1 : Colour and light frequency in each cycle

Cycle	Length	Colour and light frequency	Colour and light frequency / Length of cycle
1	2.5 months	17	6.8
2	11.5 months	131	11.3
3	15 months	291	19.6

Table 7.2 : Colour and light frequency occurring in the stages of each cycle

Stage	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
One (Nigredo)	2	2	14
Two (Albedo)	15	86	142
Three and four (Citrinitas/Rubedo)	-	43	135

In cycle 3, several clear light dreams and clear light experiences also emerged for the first time in U’s process. These are defined and explained in the analysis under the heading Clear light dreams and experiences. The theme of the Beloved became much more prominent in cycle 3 than in cycle 2. This seems to coincide with the experiences of Clear light in the dreams and upon waking from the dreams.

Cycle 3 was similar to cycle 2 in terms of the appearance of marriages, births and deaths. However, these seemed to structure the process with marriage, birth and deaths following in that sequence for each stage of the process, i.e. death heralded the end of the one stage and prepared the dreamer for the subsequent stage to emerge. Marriage (of opposites) followed, confirming the establishment of the next stage. This was followed by a birth (the integration of the opposites in a new way) and death then appeared to end the stage. Fabricius (1994) mentions this sequence of operations in the alchemical transformation process.

In looking at the dream texts in cycle 3 it was initially difficult to establish the stages of the cycle with any real clarity or certainty. Cycle 3, however, (see Graph 21) is similar in form to cycle 2 and yet it appeared from the texts that the levels of self seemed mixed up with each other right throughout the cycle. Careful re-examination revealed that the Wise self themes (quaternity symbols, Self, opposites conflicting, colour red, danger) were present throughout the cycle, mixed in with the Creative self early on in the cycle and with the Loving self and Wise self subsequently. In looking at transition points or distinct endings of a stage, the end of March 2001 stands out, when U. passed through No-man's land and the colours black and white appeared, light and dark. Death appeared too and "*a descent from the top floor down to the kitchen*" followed, suggesting a grounding or coagulating of what had been encountered or opened up to in the preceding months. Hence this could be seen as the completion of the first stage, the Nigredo, in cycle 3. Early on in this stage the animals (instinctual forces) served as images for the transformation of fire in U.'s psyche (9 Feb 2001). This also suggested the presence of the Nigredo stage. April 2001 saw the sudden emergence of the colour orange, thus signifying the start of stage 2, Albedo, in cycle 3.

Stage two of cycle 3 ends in November 2001, with the Sacred self themes of the gloria, hymns and splendour.

Stage 3, Citrinitas, is short, occurring during November 2001, and ends with a descent "*North through a tunnel, then down*", and "*Go and bury yourself, in the earth, cover yourself with twigs...*" (Dream 2, 25 November 2001).

The fourth stage lasts from late November 2001 right through to April 2002, with the white and black water animals signifying the completion of the balance of the psyche.

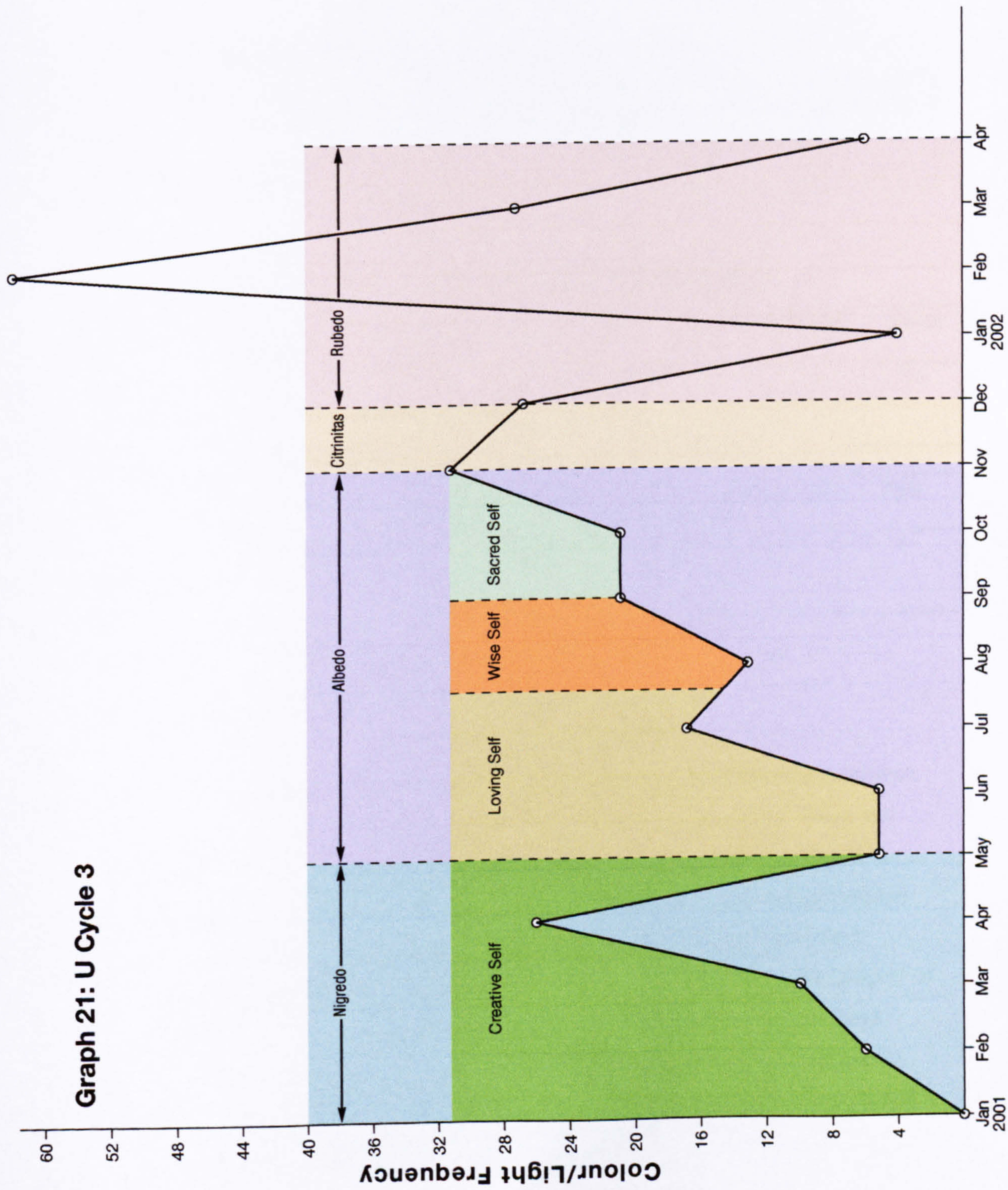
The four stages could therefore be seen as Nigredo (stage 1), Albedo (stage 2), Citrinitas (stage 3) and Rubedo (stage 4). The last two stages were easily identified with the relevant alchemical stages, but stages 1 and 2 were less clear. Stage 1 (Nigredo) has the Creative self - normally associated with Albedo. Stage 2, however, has only the Loving, Wise and Sacred levels of self appearing, however, suggesting Albedo, i.e. it seemed as though the Instinctual self had been skipped over.

In summing up the change in the way the stages appeared in cycle 3, it seemed that a shift had taken place between cycle 2 and 3 such that the stages and levels of self were experienced very differently. It is as though the levels of self and the stages in cycle 3 were being experienced against the background of, or within, the context of the Wise self. An explanation for this is pursued under the section Discussion of Analysis below.

Finally, the levels of self appeared in cycle 3 as follows: Creative self in January, February and March 2001, Loving self and Wise self in April, May, June and July, and the Sacred self between August and October 2001. There was evidence of these levels of self being re-experienced on the descent in the Rubedo stage.

Graph 21, overleaf, shows the levels of self as they appeared through the cycle.

Graph 21: U Cycle 3



Frequency of appearance of Colour, Light/Dark in the four stages of cycle 3

Table 7.3 below shows the frequency of appearance of all the colours, light/dark through the Nigredo stage and through the combined stages of Albedo, Citrinitas and Rubedo.

Table 7.3 : Stage one : Nigredo

Colour	light	White	black	silver	yellow	brown
Frequency of appearance	4	3	3	2	1	1

Total: 14

Table 7.3 : Stages two, three and four : Albedo, Citrinitas, Rubedo

Colour	light	white	Dark/Black	red	blue	gold	yellow	brown
Frequency of appearance	60	42	33	27	24	17	16	14

Colour	orange	black and white	green	silver	turquoise	Pink
Frequency of appearance	11	11	8	5	5	4

Total count for colour, light/dark in stages 2, 3 and 4 is 277.

Total count for Cycle 3 is 291.

Stage one shows light as the most frequent in the dreams followed by white and then black. This pattern is followed in stages 2, 3 and 4 combined together. White and black are quite close numerically, mirroring the balance that has been achieved in cycle 3 between the two forces that those colours symbolise. Gold has decreased in frequency of appearance since cycle 2, as has silver, whereas red and blue have become prominent and brown and orange slightly less so. This mirrors the imagery of stages 2, 3 and 4 where by the end clearly white, red, blue, gold and yellow were employed to symbolise the integration of the earthly and transcendental qualities in this cycle. Finally at the end of the cycle, the balance was symbolised by the images of black and white appearing in the same symbol.

The combining of opposites 'higher' and 'lower' energies (head and bottom) of the psyche as shown by the combining of colours in cycle 3

The same colours were present in cycle 3 as in cycle 2. However, silver, which appears in cycle 3, does not appear in any combination with another colour.

Significantly, in cycle 2, silver combined with gold. The fact that it does not combine at all in cycle 3 could mean that, being already integrated, it does not feature in the dynamics of transformation in cycle 3. This applies similarly to gold, except that gold appears right at the end of cycle 3 in a quaternity of colours and combinations: turquoise-light blue, golden, blue and red-pink. The image holding these colours was "*the book*" (4 March 2002). Table 7.4 below lists the combinations.

The opposite colours being combined were red-blue, red-white, turquoise-red, red-violet, white-pink and white-blue. One quaternity symbol combines blue-red with pink and gold, and the other combined red-white and blue-red. The rest of the combinations were either carry-overs from cycle 2 (yellow-orange, red-brown) or they were colours that were relatively closer together (red-violet, red-orange). The yellow-white combination of opposites early on (28 February 2001) might be explained by U.'s comment on 14 March 2002, when the urine of a male (yellow) and (white) milk of mother's breast are both fed to the baby. The urine is from the father - since the masculine and feminine were integrated in cycle 2, they now have to be combined in a different way, higher energy (mother's milk from breast) with the grosser energy, urine from the father.

The opposites in cycle 3 are all a combination of higher and lower frequency colours (higher and lower energies emerging in the psyche). This contrasts with cycle 2 in which only the opposites of gold and silver, the combining of masculine and feminine, spatially present on the left and right in the dreams, were considered balanced and integrated.

The two instances of opposite colour combinations in the quaternity symbol (27.11.01 and 4.3.02) seemed significant, the first occurring at the beginning of the Rubedo and the second occurring at the end of Rubedo.

The explanation for these combinations is not really fully understood. However, they do seem to be associated with the integration and balancing of the higher and lower energies in U.

Clearly, the process in cycle 3 has focussed on the combination of ‘heaven and earth’, the completion of which is symbolised by the black baby whale and white furry water animal swimming together with U. There were hints of black and white coming together earlier on in cycle 3 when, on 27 March 2001, there is dark and light in the ‘*No man’s land*’ landscape.

Table 7.4, overleaf, shows the colour combinations in cycle 3.

Table 7.4: Colour Combinations in Cycle 3

Opposites	Colour combination	Date	Stage of process	Level of self
✓	Yellow-white (refers to male and female fluids and tubes, which appear in 14.3.02)	28.2.01	Albedo	Creative
✓	Dark and light (No-man's land)	27.3.01		
	Red-orange	14.4.01	Albedo	
	Yellow-orange	29.6.01	Albedo	
✓	Blue-red carpet	15.7.01	Albedo	
✓	Turquoise-red and red-violet	18.7.01	Albedo	
	Red-brown	7.8.01	Albedo	Wise
✓	White and red (face painting)	21.9.01	Albedo	Sacred
	Yellow-red-orange (multiplicatio) (feeding 100,000)	12.10.01	Albedo	Sacred
✓	Red + blue (blanket wrapped round U. and baby)	21.11.01	Citrinitas	
	Yellow-rusty red (purification needed) (brown-golden light)	22.11.01	Citrinitas	
	Red-blond hair	25.11.01	End Citrinitas	
✓	Red-sky blue-white-pink (flowers and generations)	27.11.01	Rubedo (quaternity symbol)	
✓	Blue-red-yellow (clear light dream, coniunctio)	7.2.02	Rubedo	
✓	Red-white-blue and blue-red (Holy Grail, set in Africa)	27.2.02	Rubedo	
✓	Turquoise-light blue, golden, blue-red-pink (colour of "The Book")	4.3.02	Rubedo (quaternity symbol)	
✓	<u>Black</u> baby whale and <u>white</u> water animal	2.4.02	Rubedo	

In comparing Table 7.4 Cycle 3 with Table 6.4 Cycle 2, there is a clear increase in colour combinations (10 in cycle 2 of which three were opposites, and 17 in cycle 3 of which 11 were opposites).

Clear Light dreams and Clear Light experiences in Cycle 3

A Clear Light dream is defined as a dream in which intense light appears in the dream, and is the central, important experience in the dream. The clear light is always seen as a white light.

A Clear Light experience is defined as a dream in which the dreamer is conscious of dreaming, and of seeing an intense light in the dream, and upon waking still sees the light with open eyes. The role of such experiences is considered in the discussion section of the thesis.

A Clear Light dream was identified when light not only appeared in a dream, but it made a significant impact upon the dreamer. An experience of Clear Light was identified when the dream image or waking experience gave way to seeing only an intense, very bright clear light.

The Tibetans' definition of clear light is different, being of a more subtle nature. However, the above definition of Clear Light was decided on merely as a means of comparing the changes in the experience of light and colour when comparing cycle 1 with cycle 2.

In Table 7.5, Cycle 3, the occurrences of Clear Light dreams and experiences are shown. In some cases U. awoke from a Clear Light dream to have a Clear Light experience. This is also shown in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5: Clear Light dreams and Clear Light experiences in Cycle 3

Clear Light dream number	Dates	Stage	Clear Light experiences number
1	28.4.01	Albedo	1
2	25.5.01	Albedo	
3	2.7.01	Albedo	
4	29.8.01	Albedo	
5	25.9.01	Albedo	
6	29.9.01	Albedo	
7	3.11.01	Albedo	
8	20.12.01	Rubedo	2
9	4.2.02	Rubedo	
10	7.2.02	Rubedo	3
	26.2.02	Rubedo	4

Clearly the rate of appearance of Clear Light dreams and Clear Light experiences increases as the cycle proceeds, but ceases to appear towards the end of the cycle.

Table 7.6 below shows the increasing impact of colour, light/dark as well as the sudden appearance of Clear Light dreams and Clear Light experiences when going from cycles 1 and 2 to cycle 3. Clearly there has been a marked ‘shift’ in the dreams, suggesting a more profound ‘shift’ in consciousness.

Table 7.6: A Comparison of Cycles 1, 2 and 3

Cycle no.	Cycles 1 & 2	Cycle 3
Appearance of colour, dark and light	131	291
Clear Light dreams	Possibly 1	10
Clear Light experiences	0	4
Duration	14 months	15 months

In cycle 2 there were 131 references to colour, dark and light. However, there was one ‘nearly Clear Light’ dream but no Clear Light experiences. (There were five references to light on 17 June 2000.) In cycle 3 there were 291 references to colour, dark and light. There were 10 Clear Light dreams and four experiences of Clear Light. These are discussed below under the theme of light.

7.2 The Alchemical Stages of Cycle 3

Cycles 1 and 2 involved 81 dreams, of which 4 were recorded as Nigredo dreams, 53 in Albedo and 24 in Citrinitas/Rubedo. During cycle 3, 154 dreams were recorded, of which 15 were in Nigredo, 57 in Albedo, 14 in Citrinitas and 68 were in Rubedo. The lengths of the combined cycles (1 and 2) and of cycle 3 were approximately the same, in between 14 and 15 months respectively. The process of cycle 3, being the most important of the three cycles, has been included in the description below. See dream texts, appendix VIII.

Nigredo

This phase begins with a metaphorical experience of death at the North Pole for U. and her male friend/lover. Avicenna in his visionary geography reports the North Pole as being the symbolical spiritual pole of our being (Corbin, 1960) where we can locate the *aqua vivens*, our spirit - 'the waters of life'. Following a celebration/wedding on 24 February 2001, there is a baby born through U.'s mother on 2nd March 2001. This follows on with psychologically testing anxieties of a Master Class (Dream 2, 9 March 2001) and the realisation that her piano is only partly in tune - the upper octaves are in tune, but the lower octaves are out of tune. Finally, on 27 March 2001, death is present in Dream 1 (dead deer) and in Dream 3, 27 March, U. enters the deeply challenging journey of the move through 'No-man's land' - an endless prairie of light and dark. This journey goes Westwards, although she is reminded "*I am already in God's land and there is nowhere else I could possibly go*" (commentary D.3). U. still has to go through the presence of this No-man's land as a purification. This marks the end of the Nigredo phase.

Albedo

April 1st initiates the second phase, Albedo, with a dream of oranges being pushed into her navel. Now the colour orange and other colours become profuse in her dreams. It appears five more times in a short series of dreams between 4 and 13 April. Possibly this may be related to the five coniunctio dreams (of which four are described as marriages - 7 August, 29 September, 12 October, 26 October (attempted

marriage) and 3 November) in Albedo. Each coniunctio seems to be incorporating a different aspect. On 7 August there is a healing ritual for a woman and marriage with the bride having brown-reddish hair. On 29 September, the background scenery is orange-golden and U.'s partner (bridegroom) has the name Rasul, which means 'the Being of Splendour'. (His blond head is shining like the sun.) On 12 October the third marriage is between U. and her white European culture and an Arab man (brown) and his Arabic culture. A hundred thousand guests are fed in the desert. The 100,000 are divided into diamond shaped squares (equal number of male, female in each diamond formation).

Each diamond shaped formation is connected on all four sides to other diamond shaped formations of people. The bride is wearing yellow and her sister is dressed in bright red-orange clothes and veils. On 26 October, the fourth coniunctio (marriage) is supposed to take place. However, even though four people are present, it seems the pastor is not quite ready and the marriage doesn't take place. Instead, U. and the congregation sing the Gloria, from the hymnbook. On 3 November, the fifth coniunctio becomes the fourth actual marriage and takes place in a temple of light. Four women are present, and two beautiful figures, a god and a goddess, who unite in a coniunctio ritual. These five coniunctio experiences were hinted at on 17 July 2001, when U. dreamt of five golden rings, four of which are marriage rings, the narrowest being the ring that fits inside the first wedding ring. The Albedo phase ends with the death of the Queen on 4 November 2001.

Citrinitas

On 8 November, the Citrinitas phase begins with the resurrection of the Queen (ending on 25 November with the descent down through a tunnel). On 25 November 2001, 'vision quest', U. dreams of being told to '*bury herself in the earth*'. She goes to the top floor of a house with her friend I., who seems to play a key role as a guide, and the two bring themselves under a golden blanket. On 26 November 2001 U. is initiated as a priestess and on 28 November 2001 U. dreams of an eagle swooping down to grab a snake, suggesting the integration of 'heaven and earth'. This signifies the end of Citrinitas and the beginning of the Rubedo phase.

Rubedo

Rubedo is confirmed (29 November) by the images of eating chestnuts and swimming West through Africa (4 December) as well as the dream of a mandala on 7 December, in which U. finds herself in a round, open, light space on which a square pedestal exists for her to put three bouquets of flowers, blue, red/pink and white. On the same night U. has a dream of four generations (U., father, grandfather and a little boy). According to Jung, four represents the completion (and in this case the grounding) of something. In a sense it is leaving her earthly ancestors behind. Rubedo proceeds on 2 January 2002 with the birth of a baby (whose parents are black), symbolising the incorporation of spirit and body, a return to the earth.

On 31 January 2002 U. dreams of sulphur, something “*coming up to the earth*” (signifying an ending of ties to the past). On 2 and 3 February respectively U.’s grandfather and grandmother die. On 4 February she experiences her second Clear Light experience, but this time it comes from focussing on a dream the night before. This continues on 7 February with another Clear Light dream. U. awakes with the dream continuing as a conscious Clear Light experience. On 16 February 2002, there is a coniunctio experience followed by the birth of a baby wrapped in green and turquoise, suggesting the grounding of the colours of splendour in the earth (Jung, 1983).

It seemed now that the dreams and qualities of the previous two weeks, through which the transcendental had come, were now integrated consciously in U. Following this is a celebration in which U. receives an initiation into the mysteries of Isis, and a mortificatio operation on 31 March 2002, when the King stabs the Queen to death. A final marriage takes place on 3 April 2002, between a future political leader and his beautiful young wife. Correspondingly, in her life, U. has in fact begun to become involved as an educational leader in the Governmental school system, introducing important new changes in the country’s educational system.

This cycle (3) ends with a ‘Higher Initiation’ on 14 April 2002.

7.3 Summary of the Stages of Cycle 3 and a comparison with Cycle 2

It would seem, from the above, therefore, that the four alchemical phases of nigredo, albedo, citrinitas and rubedo are present in the third cycle of dreams, although the dream content is significantly different from that found in cycle 2. This is discussed below in the analysis of the themes of cycle 3. Compared with cycle 2, the main differences are that light together with colours in cycle 3 were emphasised. For example, some of the experiences of light in the dreams could be described as Clear Light dreams. There were two instances of a Clear Light experience (whilst awake and conscious). These phenomena accord with the descriptions of Clear light dreams and Clear light experiences given in the 'Tibetan Yoga of the Dream State' (Wangyal, 1998). In fact, most of the dreams in cycle 3 according to U. were much clearer than in cycle 2.

It is noted that since no precise definitions of Clear Light dreams, Clear dreams or ordinary dreams are given in the Tibetan tradition, it was therefore decided to rely on more general descriptions of these dream types when comparing them to their Tibetan equivalents for classification. Thirdly, cycle 2 showed the six levels of consciousness in a clear step-wise ascent during Albedo, whereas in cycle 3, whilst there is a step-wise ascent, it is not as clear as it is mixed in with a continuous background of Wise self themes. In addition, there seem to be many examples of ascents and descents in each phase of the cycle. It was as though the opposites of up and down, high and low, had to become less polarised by having them contact each other - transmuting the lower energies in the psyche (sexual, aggressive) and bringing the transcendental higher energies down to earth so that they may become parts of the conscious personality. To sum up, in cycle 2 the overall emphasis was on balancing the masculine (right) with the feminine (left), whilst in cycle 3 emphasis lay on balancing left and right and above and below.

7.4 The presence of the Wise self themes throughout the various levels of self in Cycle 3

When it comes to an explanation of why cycle 3 is so different from cycle 2 we must go to the Sufi model of transformation, in which the aspirant experiences leaps in their consciousness during the developmental process of spiritual awakening. It is as

though each developmental shift moves the aspirant deeper and deeper, moving through a succession of increasingly subtle spheres of light (Chittick, 1998). These spheres are not the same as the levels of self experienced as an ascent in Albedo and as a descent in Rubedo.

However, each sphere of light that the aspirant experiences, enables them to transit the six levels of self in terms of the light of that sphere. A simple analogy would be to enter a dark room and explore it silently through touch. Then if your ear plugs were removed you could experience it through sound and touch. Then imagine a dim light coming on and seeing the room as well. Then imagine a beautiful coloured light coming on in the room lighting everything up in a particular hue, and so on. Each 'shift' in the senses enables you to experience the same room in richer and richer detail. The aspirant, with each developmental shift, will experience the alchemical process of the stages and the six levels of self, ascending and descending with increasing subtlety.

What is implied here by this Sufi model is that the aspirant can experience the six subtle levels of self again and again through each successive but increasingly subtle sphere of light. Returning to the dream texts we find that in this case U.'s 'subtle shift' accessed a new sphere of light in which the background or foundation of it contains the themes and imagery of the Wise self. This shift also included the appearance of intense, Clear Light in the dreams and in some cases in the waking experiences, following the dream. To sum up, U. experienced herself 'stepping' through the six levels of self, all the while experiencing more light and colour on each level compared to cycle 2.

In addition, the dreams in cycle 3 seem to indicate a facility to be able to ascend or descend, sometimes in the same dream. To return to the Sufi model of spheres of consciousness, it would seem that U. shows a significant shift in her consciousness in cycle 3, compared to cycle 2. The consciousness in cycle 3 is more subtle and evidenced a more impersonal element in the cycle and it has a relative absence of more personal material or worldly themes in the dreams, i.e. cycle 2 had far more dreams that referred to U.'s personal life or her personal beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, prejudices, etc. In cycle 3 the dreams are clearly more impersonal, with far fewer

dreams being personal than in cycle 2. This was evidenced most clearly in the ‘Clear Light dreams’, of which there were none in cycle 2.

7.5 Analysis of the main Visual metaphors used in cycle 3

As in chapter six, showing cycles 1 and 2, cycle 3 revealed several visual metaphors that reflected the inner changes taking place in the dreamer. Most of these metaphors were different to cycles 1 and 2, with the exception of direction and numbers, being used in all three cycles. The complete analysis of the visual metaphors in cycle 3 appears in appendix VIII. The themes were directions, food, kitchen and tableware, music, numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5, theme of Beloved, theme of Light, and integrating Higher, Lower, Left and Right. The latter theme, which involved directions in the dreams, showed that in cycle 3 the resolving of opposite directions involved the balancing of Higher and Lower, North and South in the dreams, whereas in cycle 2 east and west, left, right, forwards and backwards were being balanced. It would seem therefore that, overall, the process involved a balancing and integrating of all directions within the dream psyche.

7.6 Evidence of the Levels of Self in Cycle 3

Evidence, in tabular form in Dream Data Sheets 7.1 to 7.6 is presented below for the presence of the levels of self in cycle 3. A unique feature of cycle 3 is that the Wise self themes are present throughout the cycle. Evidence of this is listed below accordingly. The Wise self themes in the background of the dreams are present in Albedo and in Citrinitas and Rubedo. The relevant words of each dream are taken from the dream text. The dreams are listed in chronological order. Commentaries by the dreamer are also included.

Dream Data Sheet 7.1: U. Cycle 3 - Wise self themes in the Creative self

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Fire (WS) + mechanical objects (CS)	<i>“Museum.” “There are <u>open fireplaces ... burning</u>. One is <u>very big, like a huge grill</u> which is moving back and forth. Where is the <u>‘motor’</u> ... <u>I look under the metal feet</u> ... This is how the <u>fire is kindled</u>.”</i>	9.2.01

Dream Data Sheet 7.1: U. - Wise self themes in the Creative self continued

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Learning(CS)	<i>"<u>Back to school.</u>"</i>	5.3.01
Gifts/talents (CS)	<i><u>Dream 1</u>: "I have won the <u>Nobel prize</u> for working in the media."</i>	7.3.01
Tension of opposites	<i><u>Dream 2</u>: "We must bear the New, preferably voluntarily." <u>Commentary</u>: "What I am doing in my life right now, hold the <u>tension between the lovely ivory tower</u> where I can meditate and unite, <u>and the outside world</u> which is demanding on my time and strength right now."</i>	
Learning(CS) Conflict of opposites (WS)	<i>"<u>Maths class.</u>" In focussing on 3 March: "Bear the <u>tension between the opposites.</u>"</i>	9.3.01
Learning/adjusting thinking (CS)	<i>"There is a <u>brown piano</u> ... an old <u>teacher</u> is there .. I open the piano and play a few chords .. higher ones are ok but the lower octaves are <u>badly out of tune.</u>" "My teacher says <u>I must learn now to interpret the music, this will take me to a 'different level'.</u>"</i>	24.3.01
Opposites Jealousy (WS)	<i>"In the same house, but on a higher floor with windows to the south ... My sister gets a room with windows and a balcony <u>south and north.</u> I am <u>jealous.</u>"</i>	
Opposites (WS) Learning (CS)	<i>"I get dizzy from the height." "The higher ones (octaves on piano) are ok, but the lower octaves are badly out of tune." "My teacher confirms this."</i>	
Opposites (WS) Finding yourself (WS)	<i>"I am visiting a farm in the endless prairie, <u>light and dark.</u>" "Does she (mare) still know where she is, on my land, the No-man's land? - Yes, I say, she knows that - the (farmer) says: I always see to it that they know this, so that they are <u>never completely lost.</u>"</i>	27.3.01
Red/orange (WS)	<i>"The author of a play is <u>red-haired.</u>"</i>	4.4.01
	<i>"Three <u>orange/red</u> suns are moving to the right."</i>	7.4.01
	<i>"A baby with an <u>orange</u> body and hair."</i>	8.4.01
Colour + quaternity symbol (WS)	<i>"I show a slide which is a small <u>orange square.</u>" "I must swing myself from the gable of one <u>orange</u> roof to the other."</i>	11.4.01
Magic (CS)	<i><u>Dream 2</u>: "A <u>magic</u> sentence to fulfil wishes is given to me."</i>	18.4.01
	<i><u>Dream 4</u>: "My little daughter goes to a <u>magic</u> world. Instead of fighting the monster she offers her help."</i>	18.4.01

Dream Data Sheet 7.1: U. - Wise self themes in the Creative self continued

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Fire (WS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : <i>"Fire! A huge fire, burning brightly. I am not burnt, but I get purified."</i>	23.4.01
Magic (CS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : <i>"I'm in a cabin in the woods, far away from civilisation. Somehow a <u>magical</u> place."</i>	23.4.01
Key:	CS = Creative self theme WS = Wise self theme	

Dream Data Sheet 7.2: U. - Wise self themes in the Loving self

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Love (LS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : <i>"We are outside now, in a strange place, mountains on one side, one stripe totally dark, the next one light."</i> <i>"I see O. in a restaurant with friends. I don't want to join them, <u>I want to be alone with him</u>, so I call him with my eyes. We stand in a dark area, he embraces and kisses me so I almost faint ..."</i>	25.4.01
Self (WS)	<i>"These dreams are about the Self. In both women the archetype of the Self is constellated."</i>	28.4.01
Red (WS)	<i>"A man with a beard is sitting a little further away, reddish face, red-brown hair."</i>	
Fire (WS)	<u>Dream 2 Commentary</u> : on waking up with a song: <i>"I light the fire."</i>	17.5.01
Opposites (WS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : <i>White and black disks in necklaces.</i>	19.5.01

Dream Data Sheet 7.2: U. - Wise self themes in the Loving self continued

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Passion (WS) Longing, love/beauty (LS)	<p><i>"A man is telling me his dream, his hands on his belly, he is tired. A woman interprets: <u>"He doesn't want only sex, but unite the centres of his belly and the head."</u> The teacher agrees. She has <u>beautiful legs</u>."</i></p> <p><i>"Then I am in a store with god-statues made of wood. A male god is wearing a crown with a round top, reminding me of a lingam. I like it very much. Then I see a small relief representing a god whose head is shining, and as I look more closely, I also see golden rays emanating from his penis. A woman figure has her head there, which triggers <u>an orgasm in me</u>."</i></p>	25.5.01
Opposites (WS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : "White people, black people."	5.6.01
Law/distort and mistrust/Truth (WS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : "don't trust any lawyer, they all lie, twist the facts." "We are 5 people, standing in form of a pentagon, one of us is a lawyer. I realise he is <u>not</u> dangerous if I stand next to him."	10.6.01
Love (LS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "If you were a cook then I would gladly become a kitchen maid, <u>in order to always be close to you</u> . <u>My love</u> is so big and makes me so happy, even if he does not understand that and barely responds. What counts is my <u>loving him</u> , everything else is not important."	
Love, harmony and beauty (LS)	<u>Commentary after 10 June, Dream 2</u> : " <u>Beauty</u> is all around me in this phase of my life, it is the same thing as <u>Love</u> and <u>Harmony</u> , which are again so overwhelming in Dream 2. I am even ready to become a kitchen maid, to live solely for my <u>love</u> . I am experiencing for the first time that <u>loving</u> is wonderful even without the expectation of a response."	10.6.01
Love (LS) Distortion (WS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "I am in a restaurant with O., sitting opposite. He wants to convert me to AUNS (an extreme rightist political group)."	17.6.01
Love (LS)	"I meet this man ... we embrace and kiss, standing there for a long time."	28.6.01
Harmony (LS)	"Then I am with N., in an open landscape ... I <u>hum that song</u> for him, and he <u>hums</u> with me ... He finds that not surprising, very natural."	
Yellow-orange (WS)	"A car (2CV) shining in bright yellow-orange. We go uphill. P. changes into <u>3rd</u> or <u>4th</u> gear."	29.6.01

Dream Data Sheet 7.2: U. - Wise self themes in the Loving self continued

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Beauty (LS)	<i>"lots of <u>clothes of Claudia Schiffer</u> are hanging on a rod ... I notice a large cloak in shining blue silk, sky blue, the lining inside has all the pastel colours of a rainbow. It is so <u>beautiful</u> that I will buy it for sure."</i>	1.7.01
Beloved (LS)	<i><u>Dream 2</u>: "I see my <u>Beloved</u> clearly, he is sitting in the light, ... he is a professor, a mixture between O. and N. ..." "... I am in the light emanating from the professor, my beloved."</i>	2.7.01
(LS)	<i><u>Commentary</u> on Dream 2: "The <u>beloved</u>: he appears in most of the dreams now. Usually a man I don't know. So this dream is a development - I know both men."</i>	2.7.01
Opposites (separatio) (WS)	<i><u>Commentary</u> "The poster is white (left) and dark (right). It is interesting that I am trying to cut it, to separate the two parts."</i>	
<u>Quaternity</u> (WS) Gold (WS) Beloved (LS)	<i><u>Dream 2</u>: "In all there are 4 rings." "But I only have a ring with a golden heart on it, similar to the one O. is wearing."</i>	17.7.01
Key: LS = Loving self theme WS = Wise self theme		

Dream Data Sheet 7.3: U. - Level of Wise self

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Quaternity symbol (WS)	<i><u>Dream 2</u>: "In all there are <u>4 rings</u>."</i>	17.7.01
	<i><u>Dream 2</u>: "He asks (having come back from the dead): Is it not 2002? I had received the prophecy that I would wake up in 2002."</i>	19.7.01
Presence of mastery/master, Quaternity symbol (WS) Colour red hair (WS)	<i>"We come to a rectangular pool, the <u>master</u> says that we should stand around it in a circle. ... The bride appears. The master says: Look, through our support her hair has grown back. She has beautiful <u>brown-reddish hair</u>."</i>	
Achievement Quaternity symbol (WS)	<i><u>Dream 2</u>: "Last night I sang at the opera, one of the female <u>main parts</u> ... people paid <u>400 francs</u> per seat."</i>	20.8.01
Key: WS = Wise self theme		

Dream Data Sheet 7.4: U. - Wise self themes in the Sacred self

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Splendour Sense of eternal (SS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : "I ask the master/God, to whom all this <u>splendour</u> belongs?" "The colours have been there for <u>eternities</u> . They don't fade when you look at them or open the box."	29.8.01
Faith (WS)	<u>Dream 2 Commentary</u> : "So what is holding me back might be a <u>lack of faith</u> in that light."	29.8.01
Sacred/religious (SS)	"In the snow, in front of the house, somebody writes with a finger: Sankta Theresia (for sale)."	14.9.01
Mastery/ Accomplish- ment in sport (WS)	"Theresia is a famous ski racer. She <u>won lots of medals</u> and she was the <u>best skier</u> we had."	14.9.01
Religious figure (SS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : " <u>Anandi Ma</u> (she is the living Satguru of Kundalini Yoga) comes to visit me."	24.9.01
Mastery (WS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "One of the great tenors is visiting us. He is in the kitchen cooking something with chocolate." <u>Commentary</u> : "These 2 dreams are parallel, a famous person comes to visit us and goes to the kitchen to prepare something. The woman guru creates beauty, the man tenor liquefies chocolate. I asked in a dream re-entry what he stands for, and he said: I am a <u>master</u> in my field, so <u>it is mastery</u> ."	24.9.01
Light of splendour (SS) Celestial counterpart (SS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "I see my face with all its features and wrinkles ... the face is indescribably beautiful. I am deeply impressed, because it is lit from the inside, light is streaming out of every pore. <u>Beauty and splendour</u> ."	25.9.01
Splendour (SS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : "Tell me by which name you want me to call you - He says: Rasul (Being of Splendour). His blond head is shining like the sun."	29.9.01
Orange-golden (WS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "The <u>backdrop</u> of this whole dream is <u>orange-golden</u> ... We kiss again and I say: I have forgotten your name. Tell me by which name you want me to call you."	29.9.01
Sacred (SS)	"A hilly region that belongs to a <u>monastery</u> ."	5.10.01
Orange (WS)	"I am eating gnocchi ... and an <u>orange</u> sauce around them. he calls them "gnocchi à la (name of someone from the	
Sacred (SS)	monastery) to <u>honour the monks</u> ."	

Dream Data Sheet 7.4: U. - Wise self themes in the Sacred self continued

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Desert (WS) Treasure (SS) Quaternity symbol (WS) Red (WS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : "Group sitting around on ground in the <u>desert</u> , arranged in a <u>diamond shape</u> ." "Beef from the grill, partly still <u>red</u> , many layers, put out on the floor in <u>diamond shapes</u> ."	12.10.01 12.10.01
Sacred (SS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "The <u>three churches</u> ."	12.10.01
Child/Inno- cence/singers (SS) Quaternity (WS)	"A little girl, a <u>child star</u> , wants to meet Heintje, a boy singing star. He gives <u>4 concerts</u> ."	24.10.01
Religious (SS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "In a <u>church</u> , a marriage is about to take place bridegroom, bride, pastor, me and P. ..." "When the <u>singing</u> is finished ... I say to P.: Look up the " <u>Gloria</u> " in the <u>hymnbook</u> ! Then I speak to the congregation: "We will now sing the " <u>Gloria</u> " (<u>Glory to God</u> <u>in heaven</u> ...)."	26.10.01
Spiritual figure (SS) Coniunctio	" <u>God</u> unites with <u>Goddess</u> ."	3.11.01
Sovereignty (SS) Mortificatio	"I am with the <u>Queen</u> ... don't you see she is dying?"	4.11.01
Key:	WS = Wise self theme SS = Sacred self theme	

Dream Data Sheet 7.5: U. - Wise self themes in the Citrinitas Stage

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Death/horror (WS)	<i>"There are lots of cows in the butcher's, <u>he cuts their heads off with an axe</u> and then cuts the trunks in two with one stroke. ... I am supposed to do that. I can't do that. I am horrified by it."</i> <i>Commentary: "A few hours after this dream I was at W.'s seminar. She gave me a very short personal message, saying that I <u>needed to experience horror</u>, maybe to go to places that <u>horrify me</u>, ... in order to get used to it."</i>	23.11.01
Vision quest (WS) Red (WS)	<i><u>Dream 2: "Sort of a vision quest."</u></i> <i>"I see how another woman approaches him with long, <u>reddish-blond hair</u>."</i>	25.11.01
Key: WS = Wise self theme		
N.B. No obvious Citrinitas themes were apparent for the Citrinitas stage but the dreams between 23.11.01 and 25.11.01 are distinctly different from the Sacred self dreams of 3.11.01 (which preceded Citrinitas) and the Rubedo stage dreams which start on 26.11.01.		

Dream Data Sheet 7.6: U. - Wise self themes in the Rubedo Stage

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Conflict (WS)	<i>"The leader of the workshop says to me: haven't you received the initiation as a priestess last year? You would be the <u>ideal leader</u> for group discussion. You would not get <u>into a fight</u> with the first member of the group even before the second one had said anything."</i>	26.11.01
	<i>... "There are about 10 people in the group, in a circle. The leader is sitting North, I am sitting directly across from him. ... He tells us how <u>he used to have fights</u> in his group but <u>not any more</u> in the last year."</i>	26.11.01
Descent of eagle (RT)	<i>"I see an eagle flying, he flies so low that I can see the size of the wings, the brown design on them. I see him <u>shoot down like an arrow and grab a snake</u> ... He comes closer and closer and <u>lands</u> right in front of me."</i>	28.11.01

Dream Data Sheet 7.6: U. - Wise self themes in the Rubedo Stage continued

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Purification</u> (WS)	<u>Commentary</u> : "Next day I opened a paper and saw the title: The woman clothed with the sun. It was a thought about the revelation of John, Chapter 12/1, which I then looked up in the Bible. There John sees a woman who is clothed with the sun. She is about to give birth, a dragon attacks her, God sends an eagle to carry her away to a safe place on his wings. Reading this made me cry, God knows why."	28.11.01
Quaternity symbol (WS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "We have moved to a new apartment on top of a house, the <u>4th floor</u> ."	5.12.01
Two sides (WS)	<u>Dream 4</u> : "The <u>two sides</u> of the school."	5.12.01
Earthy (RT)	"J. (retired colleague) takes the whole class and goes through a hallway to the left ... I want to follow ... but I forgot my handbag and shoes. I find my shoes under a table, <u>full of earth</u> . I put them on anyway."	5.12.01
Aggression/ Conflict (WS)	"I am in the right part of the school building. All of a sudden a huge <u>yellow iron cube</u> approaches, <u>like a tank</u> . In a second I see the <u>aggressive face</u> of the driver. <u>A military leader</u> , maybe of the Taliban ... I have to go to the other side (left side) to warn them."	5.12.01
Square (quaternity symbol) (WS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "the Mandala"	7.12.01
Triangle symbolises fire (WS)	In a <u>square</u> pedestal, inside a large round, open, light place, U. puts <u>three bouquets of colourful flowers</u> (blue, pink and red) in shape of a <u>triangle</u> .	7.12.01
Profusion of colourful flowers (RT)		
Quaternity symbol (WS)	<u>Dream 3</u> : " <u>the 4 generations</u> "	7.12.01
Truth (WS)	"A spiritual teacher is in a house. I love him ... I would now like to experience the deeper <u>truth</u> through him."	20.12.01
Mastery (WS)	"The <u>Master</u> , Benshen ... I can see the light! He (master) disappears - only light is there. ... I want to go to the garage, where P. has parked the car. A little <u>red</u> sports car."	7.2.02

Dream Data Sheet 7.6: U. - Wise self themes in the Rubedo Stage continued

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Text/Dream</u>	<u>Date</u>
Red warriors, danger (WS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : "Church, <u>red warriors</u> , green baby." " <u>Warriors</u> on horses appear ... the men look <u>dangerous</u> , <u>red</u> clothing. ..."	16.2.02
Quaternity symbol (WS)	<u>Dream 1</u> : "The book" "Cover is <u>turquoise</u> ... <u>light blue</u> , lettering has <u>golden</u> borders ... letters look Arabic. Pages are parchment, a <u>square</u> piece of cloth has been sown by hand in each page, and the cloth has a <u>cube-shaped</u> design on it ... in <u>blue</u> and <u>red</u> ."	4.3.02
Opposites (WS)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "a cat, made of leather, with <u>black</u> and <u>white</u> fur."	9.3.02
Military (WS) Golden colours (RT)	<u>Dream 3</u> : " <u>guards in golden armour</u> are posted all along the path there, <u>armour</u> with protruding tips like on Aztec pictures."	
Red (RT)	<u>Dream 2</u> : "Swamiji" "He is wearing a <u>long dark red</u> shirt which covers him when he stands still."	24.3.02
Quaternity symbol (WS)	"I am number <u>16</u> ."	
Fire (WS)	"A <u>flame</u> shoots up out of his penis."	
Accomplish- ment (WS)	"Artistic accomplishment (on piano)."	27.3.02
Quaternity symbol (WS) Colours (RT)	<u>Dream 1</u> : "Everything is intertwined." "Drawing: A <u>square</u> on top, two lines down to a circle with an oval inside, then two flesh <u>coloured spirals</u> , like umbilical cords, spiralling around each other 3 times. To the right is a circle with a cross in it."	2.4.02
Sun (WS)	"Higher initiation" "I want to sit on my chair, but the <u>sun</u> is shining on it now, and I am not allowed to have sunshine in my face."	14.4.02
Key: WS = Wise self theme RT = Rubedo theme		

7.7 Summary of the accumulation of evidence from Chapters 6 and 7

Chapters six and seven have focused on a long case study of a woman who recorded her dreams whilst experiencing a profound psycho-spiritual transformation process. This allowed a comparison to be made between retreatants on a solo retreat experiencing a transformation process and someone who experiences a psycho-spiritual transformation 'off-retreat'.

The most important point to emerge from this comparison was the similarity between both sets of data concerning the main features of the process, i.e. in both cases the four stages and the levels of self appeared in the dreams. This was apparent from the themes that appeared in the dream texts, e.g. Nigredo themes showed the Instinctual self themes listed in template 1. Similarly, Albedo showed the themes for the different subtle levels of self listed in the templates, and the Citrinitas and Rubedo stages showed the presence of the themes listed in the templates for those stages in the retreat dreams analysis (templates 7 and 8). Similarly, the quantitative analysis in both cases revealed the same patterns in the process in the graphs.

Whilst the first point emphasised confirmation of the notion of the four stages and the subtle levels of self in the process, the second point to emerge from this comparison was a more accurate and in-depth analysis of the levels of self and of the stages. Specifically, this meant that although very few new themes were added to the templates from U.'s dream analysis, the uses of the visual metaphors in her dreams over such a long period gave a much better insight into how the psyche uses visual metaphors in dreams to tell the story of the dreamer's transformation. Accuracy and depth of understanding the process was also provided by the consistency and clarity of the stages and levels of self in U.'s process.

The third point to emerge was the realisation that a psycho-spiritual transformation can involve not only a cyclic ascent and descent through the subtle levels of self during the cycle, but a balancing and integrating of the different energies (higher, lower) and genders (male and female) within the self. The process can also continue from cycle to cycle to reveal several profound shifts in consciousness. This took place between cycles 1 and 2, and between cycles 2 and 3.

Finally, a much clearer analysis of the appearance of colour and light/dark was possible in U.'s dream analysis. It showed clearly the acceleration of the frequency of appearance of colour and light/dark as each cycle proceeded, until in cycle 3 a profusion of colour and light was apparent.

The analysis revealed the phenomenon of several Clear Light dreams which had appeared only in two retreats (S.F. and S.L.) during the retreat dream analysis and several Clear Light experiences. Only one retreatant had reported (S.F.) a single Clear Light experience.

U.'s dream analysis provided confirmation and amplification of the results of the retreat dream analysis as well as the first possible evidence of the major shifts of consciousness which take place on the spiritual path. The dreams were able to track a succession of shifts from cycles 1 to 3. To sum up, these results showed clearly the role of dreams in the psycho-spiritual transformation process.

CHAPTER 8

Analysis of a Dream Series taken from the Collected Works of Carl Jung

8.0 Introduction

An analysis of dreams recorded during a psycho-spiritual transformation process of someone who was personally not connected with this research study was undertaken as a means of checking the validity of the retreat dream and ‘off-retreat’ dream analyses.

This series of dreams was recorded by a young man who, according to Jung (1968), had an excellent scientific training and background, and who was a Roman Catholic. The entire material consisted of over a thousand dreams and visual impressions (images that came to this man’s mind whilst conscious, going to sleep or upon waking). However, Jung chose to focus on the first four hundred dreams and visions, which covered a period of nearly ten months. The young man was initially referred by Jung to a woman doctor, one of Jung’s pupils, to undertake the observation of the process. This continued for five months. Although Jung interviewed the dreamer at the very beginning, before the dream recording began, he did not see the dreamer at all for the first eight months. Thus 355 dreams were recorded without any contact with Jung. The last 45 occurred, however, under Jung’s observation. No interpretations were given, suggesting a process where unprejudiced observation and recording took place.

Unfortunately, Jung did not publish the timed sequence in which these dreams took place, so we have no idea of the time elapsed between each dream. Secondly, Jung selected 76 of the 400 for presentation in this series, which he divided into two sections, the initial series, 22 dreams, and the main part of the series, consisting of 54 dreams. Furthermore, Jung only chose extracts from the twenty-two initial dreams in order to show “how the mandala symbolism makes its early appearance and is embedded in the rest of the material”. The major part of the series, 54 dreams, which

were selected in chronological order, referred specifically to mandala symbolism. Thus we do not have a full record, or a timed sequence of all of the 400 dreams Jung examined.

Consequently no quantitative colour frequency analysis showing a graph of the levels of self was possible. However, in his analysis, Jung's aim was to show the stages of development of the Self through the emerging images of the mandala symbolism in the dreams, whereas the analysis of this research study aimed to show evidence of the stages of the process and the levels of self encountered during the process.

Finally, Jung selected the dreams to show the presence of mandala symbolism whereas in this study the long term case participant, U., selected the dreams that she felt were significant in her process. In the retreat dream study, all the dreams remembered were recorded and presented in the dream texts. In spite of these differences, Jung's case still shows evidence of the dreamer moving through the stages and levels of self during the process.

8.1 Cycle One: The initial series - 22 dreams

The alchemical stages and levels of self encountered in cycle one

Clues to the recognition of the Nigredo phase in Cycle One

Generally, the clues relate to the dreamer's worldly preoccupations. This is also the initial descent into the unconscious, encountering instinctual forces. Nigredo terminates with the appearance of a snake encircling the dreamer. Jung's interpretation of this snake dream says the dream indicates the dreamer feels safer now, his journey is now 'endowed with meaning and purpose, and thus robbed of its terrors.' (See Dream Data Sheet 8.1.)

Clues to the recognition of the Albedo phase in Cycle One

The Albedo phase starts in dream 6 with the appearance, according to Jung, of the anima figure. This figure reappears again in a great many of this dreamer's dreams.

Jung (1968) also refers to it as an example of this process running through to the historical 'rites of initiation', in which the stairway or ascent of the seven planets played an important part. He cites the Visions of Zosimos (Jung, 1983) in which the main theme centred around ascent. (See Dream Data Sheet 8.2.)

Clues to the recognition of Citrinitas/Rubedo in Cycle One

In dream 22 the instinctive forces reappear. A voice says "*everything must be ruled by the light*". This suggests that the instinctive forces have been re-encountered (Rubedo begins). They must be re-incorporated in order to proceed to cycle two. See Dream Data Sheet 8.3.

8.2 Cycle Two: The major part of the dream series - 56 dreams

Jung lists five of the initial series of dreams as involving the mandala symbol. Since the 56 dreams presented are all to do with mandala symbolism, the first dream is numbered as dream 6, being the sixth mandala dream in the series of 76 dreams.

The Alchemical stages and levels of self encountered in cycle two

The Nigredo stage is short (dreams 6-8) and characterised by the dreamer's encounters with the anima figure who offers guidance. In dream 8, the dreamer is already on his journey and set his course on the correct bearings.

The Albedo stage begins with dream 9, in which the dreamer immediately encounters the transcendental. 'A pendulum clock that goes forever without the weights running down.' Jung comments "the other centre of the personality lies on a different plane (of consciousness) from the ego, since, unlike this, it has the quality of eternity or relative timelessness."

The theme of death comes up again signalling the dreamer is coming to the end of the Albedo phase. The four colours appear in the form of the bear, an animal, whereas they last appeared in dream 23 in an inanimate drawing of clovers. Clearly, the process of formation of the quaternity is closer to appearing in a human form. Again

there is the theme of treasure and as the dreamer goes through the tunnel light starts to appear, suggesting he is emerging into a new phase, Citrinitas. In dream 40, again the unknown woman appears guiding the dreamer to discover the Pole. In alchemy the Pole is the place “where spirit is found” (Corbin, 1960). In dream 41, Citrinitas/Rubedo begins. See Dream Data Sheets 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3.

Jung finally makes an esoteric commentary on the colours; however the analysis below shows not only the stages of the process, but the levels of self being accessed, something that Jung referred to when he spoke of the Vision of Zosimos, but never really investigated.

Dream Data Sheet 8.1: The Nigredo phase in Cycles One and Two

<u>Cycle 1: Dream phrases</u>	
<i>Dreamer is at a social gathering</i>	Dream 1
<i>Standing in front of window, he blocks the view for his fellow passengers</i>	Dream 2
<i>The sea breaks into the land, flooding everything</i>	Dream 3
<i>Dreamer is surrounded by a throng of female forms</i>	Dream 4
<u>Cycle 2: Dream phrases</u>	
<u>Nigredo phase</u>	<u>Comments and dream number</u>
<i>Unknown woman is pursuing the dreamer. He keeps running around in a circle</i>	Persecution by unconscious forces. Dream 6
<i>Anima accuses the dreamer of paying too little attention to her</i>	Forces of unconscious are pestering the dreamer. Dream 7
<i>On board ship. The dreamer is occupied with a new method of taking his bearings</i>	Ending of Nigredo. A shift in his attitude to unconscious is taking place. Dream 8

Dream Data Sheet 8.2: Levels of self in the Albedo phase

1. Level of the Creative Self: Cycle One

In cycle one the dreamer was given a picture, an understanding of what the journey is about through the following dramatic images.

- a. *The anima figure, his guide, seated on a stair, showing the image of spiralling ascent.* Dream 6
- b. *The anima figure uncovers her face and it “shines like the sun”. She reveals to him what is being hidden in himself.* Dream 7
- c. *“The rainbow is to be used as a bridge.” The idea is conveyed that light is a medium for travel (to the transcendental).* Dream 8

In cycle two however, the journey or ascent begins to unfold. It starts with the Creative self.

In cycle two the Creative self is indicated by

- a. *A pendulum clock (mechanical object). This is a preview of the ‘Great Vision’ in dream 59.* Dream 9
- b. *City landscape of Peterhofstadt in Zurich.* Dream 10
- c. *The “doll woman” (inanimate object representing a person).* Dream 10
- d. *Travelling by airplane. A croquet ball suddenly smashes the mirror, an indispensable instrument of navigation.* Dream 11
- e. *Platform of a tram-car.* Dream 12

The objects mentioned from a. to e. above are either inanimate or mechanical.

2. The Loving self

Cycle One

A green land where many sheep are pastured. ‘Land of sheep’ suggesting a natural landscape, innocence and greenness. Dream 9

Cycle Two

Beauty *“a beautiful garden ... a fountain in the centre”. Dream 13*

Love *In the garden he will find a ‘companion’ - a woman or his anima figure. In the Sufi tradition she would be called the Beloved, who will lead the dreamer inwards to the centre to find his true self. Dream 13*

Dream Data Sheet 8.2: Levels of self in the Albedo phase continued

3. The Wise self

Cycle One

Danger	<i>"a <u>dangerous</u> walk"</i> Dream 12
Ascent/descent	<i>"<u>up and down</u> many ladders"</i> Dream 12
Father as guide	<i><u>Father calls out anxiously: this is the 7th</u></i> (representing the intellect as dominating the personality) Dream 13

Cycle Two

<i><u>Crossing the Rubicon</u></i>	Dream 14
<i><u>Father's guidance</u></i>	Dream 14
<i><u>Conflict</u></i>	Dream 19
<i><u>Green plant</u></i>	Dream 21
<i><u>Red-haired man and soldiers</u></i>	Dream 22
<i><u>Quaternity symbol of 4, square, <u>four</u> colours</u></i>	Dream 15, 16, 18, 22, 23
<i><u>Faith and surrender</u></i>	Dream 22
<i><u>Lift going to <u>4th</u> floor</u></i>	Dream 22

The level of the Sacred self

Cycle One

<i>Sacred ritual</i>	<i><u>Dreamer's mother pouring water from one basin to another.</u></i> Dream 15
<i>Religious figure</i>	<i><u>Suggestion of <u>Virgin Mary</u></u></i> (Jung p.70). Dream 15
<i><u>Ace of clubs as a sacred symbol</u></i>	Jung relates this being in form of a cross ie a Christian symbol. Dream 16
<i><u>Blue flower/ Hermaphrodite</u></i>	In alchemy the golden flower can be a <u>blue flower</u> . "The <u>sapphire blue flower</u> of the hermaphrodite." (Jung p.80). Dream 17

Dream Data Sheet 8.2: Levels of self in the Albedo phase continued

<u>Cycle Two</u>	
<i>Treasure</i>	<u>Crystals, diamond.</u> Dream 24
<i>Green tree</i>	Dream 27
<i>Symbol of sacred ritual</i>	<u>Steps lead up to a basin with a fountain inside.</u> Dream 28
<i>Heavenly object</i>	<u>Descent of star, stars in sky, shooting star.</u> Dream 26
<i>Religious figures</i>	Reference to <u>Christ</u> . Dream 34
	Reference to <u>Virgin Mary</u> . Dream 36
<i>Forest</i>	Dream 32
<i>Sovereignty</i>	<u>Prince.</u> Dream 37

Dream Data Sheet 8.3 Citrinitas/Rubedo phases in Cycles One and Two

<u>Clues to the recognition of the Citrinitas/ Rubedo phase in Cycle One</u>	
<u>Dream phrase</u>	<u>Comments and dream number</u>
<i>A death's head</i>	Death of Albedo phase must occur before Citrinitas phase can begin. Dream 19
<i>Skull changes into a red ball, then into a woman's head, emitting light</i>	Appearance of red and transformation to emitting light. Dream 19
<i>Worshipping the sun</i>	Sun is a clue to Citrinitas. Dream 20
<i>Everything must be ruled by the light</i>	Consciousness of light overcomes consciousness of the dark and the instinctual. Dream 22
<u>Clues to the recognition of the Citrinitas/ Rubedo phase in Cycle Two</u>	
<i>Dreamer is guided to discover Pole at risk of his life</i>	Ending of Albedo phase. Dream 40
<i>Yellow balls</i>	Yellow is clue to Citrinitas. Dream 41
<i>Spot on ground illuminated in red</i>	Red is a clue to Rubedo. Dream 42
<i>Yellow light like sun</i>	Yellow, sun are clues to Citrinitas

Dream Data Sheet 8.3 Citrinitas/Rubedo phases in Cycles One and Two continued

Clues to the recognition of the Citrinitas/ Rubedo phase in Cycle Two continued

As I leave the house I see a burning mountain and I feel: "The fire that is not put out is a holy fire."

Holy fire is a symbol of spirit and of the transcendental.
Dream 54

A silver bowl

Gold and silver appear as balance of opposing forces in Citrinitas/Rubedo.
Dream 55

Festival of solstice

Reference to sun.
Dream 56

Black eagle comes out of its egg and seizes in its beak the ring, now turned to gold

Gold is a symbol of Citrinitas.
Dream 58

*Four colours of quaternary symbol.
Three rhythms of clock*

Dream 59
Three as symbol of transcendental.
Dream 59
Transcendental nature of this vision.
Dream 59
Gold as symbol of Citrinitas/Rubedo.
Dream 59

8.3 A comparison between the two methods of analysis

The levels of self and the stages of the process

In comparing and contrasting the above analysis with that of Jung's, the first and most important point is that Jung chose this series of dreams to illustrate the presence and process of formation of the Self, through the symbolism of the mandala. This point Jung demonstrated quite clearly and convincingly. However, this analysis has chosen to focus upon the theme of the levels of self, which appear to emerge into the consciousness of the dreamer through the use of imagery in his dreams and visions. The two series, cycles one and two, both show the alchemical process as a cycle, going from the Nigredo, to Albedo to Citrinitas to Rubedo, and in both cycles the existence of the levels of self is apparent. However, the two sets of analysis, the one presented here and that of Jung, do not have to represent alternative interpretations of

the dreamer's process. Although there are differences in interpretation of some individual dreams, where Jung has chosen to emphasise the mandala symbol, this analysis has focused more on the presence of a particular level of self in the dreams. In cycle one the two different analyses have their first meeting point in dream 5. Jung sees that a phase has been completed, with dream 6 representing an ascent. This analysis sees these dreams as representing the end of Nigredo and transition to the Albedo. A second meeting point is in dream 18. This analysis sees it as the end of the Albedo phase, both analyses see dream 19 as the start of the Citrinitas/Rubedo phases of the process.

Thus it would seem that the two analyses complement each other. To ignore the signs of the development of the Self would indeed be a strange idea for a psycho-spiritual analysis of a process to ignore, and yet to include an acknowledgement of the presence of the levels of self in the process can only enrich the understanding of the development of the Self. Yet Jung's only acknowledgement of the latter phenomenon is contained in his references to images of ascent, to the ascent in consciousness of Zosimos and to the images of the planets during this ascent - an early Greek idea or belief.

A colour analysis of both cycles of dreams

The colour analysis shows a dramatic increase in the appearance of colours/light from cycle one, a score of 10, compared to cycle two, a score of 70. No colours or light featured in Nigredo in either cycle. In cycle one, the Creative self features most colours whereas in cycle two the Creative self records none. However, the Wise self, which records nothing for cycle one, records 11 in cycle two. The Pure self records one colour in the first cycle and 25 for the second cycle. The Albedo count is five for cycle one and 37 for cycle two. Clearly there has been an explosion of light appearing in going from cycle one to cycle two, but only after the transition point of the Self in the Wise self. In looking at the number of colours, dream 21 of the second cycle acts as a critical point, after which a profusion of colour (count of 36 colours) emerges.

Citrinitas/Rubedo in cycle one records five colours whereas in cycle two the count is 33, confirming the points made in the above paragraph.

Although a graph of the colour frequency versus time cannot be drawn, the profile of the levels of self, as illustrated by the colour analysis to follow, emerges clearly, with the Creative self showing prominence in cycle one and the Wise self and Sacred self being prominent in cycle two.

Citrinitas/Rubedo, which are phases of relatively short duration when compared to the Albedo phase, shows a continuing increase of the emergence of colour in the dreams as time goes on.

Clearly, as the process continues, the increasing light results in dreams that become less personal, and more transpersonal.

Table 8.1: Colour Analysis of Cycles one and two

<u>Cycle one</u>	Nigredo	0	
	Albedo	Creative self	3
		Loving self	1
		Wise self	0
		Sacred self/Pure self	<u>1</u>
<u>Cycle two</u>		<u>Sub-total of colours</u>	<u>5</u>
	Citrinitas/Rubedo		5
	<u>Total</u> Albedo/Citrinitas/Rubedo colours		10
	Nigredo	0	
	Albedo	Creative self	0
		Loving self	1
		Wise self	11
		Sacred self/Pure self	<u>25</u>
		<u>Sub-total of colours</u>	<u>37</u>
	Citrinitas/Rubedo		33
	<u>Total</u> Albedo/Citrinitas/Rubedo colours		70

8.4 A discussion of the themes present in the series of dreams

One of the themes of the second cycle of dreams is that of turning, spinning, turning to the left, circulation and circumambulation. This occurs 15 times in the 53 dreams, twice before dream 26 and 13 times afterwards. Jung interprets this as connected with the formation of the mandala symbol of the Self. Indeed, this does appear to be so, but the images of spinning, turning, particularly to the left, could also be symbolic of the turning of the chakras, which was evidenced so often in the dreams of the retreatants. Many spiritual traditions emphasise turning in the form of prayer - the Christian prayer of the stations of Christ, experienced by turning the head around in a circle, with the heart envisaged as being at the centre of the breast (heart chakra position). In Sufism there is the practice of Zikr, involving the turning of the head around the heart chakra. Here turning the head to the left starts an anti-clockwise rotation, symbolising the ascent of consciousness out of life. In Zen Buddhism there is the prayerful meditation performed whilst walking in a circle being aware of the centre. In the American Indian tradition, the sacred circle is walked around, traversing symbolic North, south, East and West, and in Islam, the culmination of the Hajj, the sacred pilgrimage, is to circumambulate around the Kaaba, the giant black stone in Mecca, which goes back to the time of Moses (Corbin, 1969).

A second theme, that of the persistent appearance of animals and reptiles in the dreams, was also significant. Jung points out (Jung, 1983) that it is necessary to transform the 'dragonian' and instinctual energies, so as to release the consciousness from its attachment to the physical body, the material world. In cycle two the dreams involved several harrowing encounters for the dreamer, in having to face up to the process of transformation of the instinctual forces, until this task is completed.

Dream 18 *"There are attempts at Being"*

Dream 19 *"I must carry on with the figure of the bleeding Christ before me and persevere in the work of Self-redemption"*

Dream 44 *"The children would like to run away but may not do so"*

Dream 50 *"The unknown woman tells him afterwards that it will not always be so: sometime he will have to stand his ground and not run away"*

Finally, it is important to note that in the first dream cycle it is as though the dreamer is “dipping in at the shallow end” of the unconscious, his experience of this ‘place’ is an encouraging preview. In cycle two the dreams do not impress the dreamer so much through the Creative self (see colour analysis) which seems to be through the mental level, but rather the dreamer experiences the real drama of the conflict in himself in the encounter with the archetype of the Self through dreams 14 to 23, the level of the Wise self. The theme of treasure, a Sacred self theme, was also important in the dreamer’s process, during which the majority of colours/light appeared in his dreams symbolising something of the treasure he was discovering - the Self becomes more and more radiant.

8.5 Summary

Chapter 8 has provided evidence of the existence of the four stages and of the levels of self accessed during a psycho-spiritual transformation process of someone who had no personal connection with the present study. The results also act as a means of confirming the validity of the transformation model and of the role of dreams in human transformation, derived from both the retreat dreams and ‘off-retreat’ dreams analysis.

In addition, this analysis showed that the concept of several levels of self can complement and add to Jung’s notion of the process of individuation of the Self.

CHAPTER 9

Discussion

9.0 Introduction and overview

A brief summary of all the research including the quantitative and qualitative analysis follows. This is included so as to condense the somewhat complex and diverse set of results from the qualitative and quantitative analyses into a briefer, simpler and more easily readable format. Following this summary, competing research perspectives on dreaming are considered in the light of the research data.

There follows a variety of topics that merit discussion covering some of the research results, the validity of the human experience and of the dream data, the subjective experience of light, and the difficulties of assessing personal transformation when reviewing the dream texts. The research results are then compared with the ideas on dreams and spiritual awakening contained in the Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi texts, leading to a triangulation of methods, i.e. the thematic and colour count analysis triangulating with the Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi texts. A short discussion comparing the contemporary views of dreaming and dreamless sleep is included as a useful comparison with and follow up to the discussion on Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi literature on the subject. It seemed appropriate to include the discussion on U.'s progression of dreams at this point.

Finally, the discussion then considers the practical applications and issues around trying to assess the extent of a psycho-spiritual transformation using the simple qualitative method, the counting of colour/light/dark in the dreams. Guidelines as to the use of this method are included. This is followed by suggestions as to the applicability of the research model and the strengths and weaknesses of the research.

9.1 A Brief Summary of the results of the analysis of the retreats, the long-term study 'off retreat' and the case presented by Jung

Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis showed the existence of four stages in the retreat process, Nigredo, Albedo, Citrinitas and Rubedo. It also showed the existence of six possible levels of self, the Instinctual self (revealed in Nigredo), the Creative self, the Loving self, the Wise self, the Sacred self and the Pure self. The last five levels of self were revealed in the Albedo stage. The seventh level of consciousness, experienced during the stage of Citrinitas, seems to be beyond self, being a transcendental state. The Rubedo stage which follows revealed a descent through and re-integration of all the levels of self back to and including the Instinctual self. Rubedo is also needed to ensure a more balanced integration of the process, in a way that allows for a multi-dimensional sense of self in which the spirit or spiritual sense is present in all levels.

Templates were created for each stage and level of self, each consisting of themes common to that level of self in the retreat process.

The role of spiritual practices on the retreat

An analysis of the role of spiritual practices on the retreat was carried out to see whether these influenced the retreatant's dreams or not. It was noted that the daily practices, with a few exceptions, did not correspond with the themes present in the retreatant's dreams. The conclusion was that although these daily practices acted as a catalyst in helping the retreat process, they did not seem to be influencing the dream themes in the dreams at night.

Colour/light/dark analysis

The colour/light/dark analysis of the dream texts showed the presence of all four stages of the retreat and all six levels of self. The graphs showed a substantial degree of agreement with the thematic analysis over the presence of the stages and the levels of self. Each retreat was first analysed as to the amount of colour/light/dark present in

the dream texts and then ranked according to the amount of light/colour/dark present per unit time. In reading and comparing texts and the rankings it became clear that the most profoundly transformative retreats had the greatest amount of colour/light/dark whilst the opposite was true of the retreats that did not record much of a transformative experience (according to the dream texts).

Thus, in Table 5.1 the colour count ratios ranked the retreats from the most profound to the least significant transformational experience. The retreats ranked highest in Table 5.1 showed all the levels of self and the stages, whereas the least significant showed only the first two stages and the first two levels of self.

Summary of the graphs 1-19 showing the colour count vs. time for each retreat

In most retreats the colours were relatively absent in the Nigredo phase. Citrinitas, the transcendental state, was very short by comparison with the other phases. In each case the Albedo and Citrinitas phases clearly revealed the most frequent appearance of colours in the graphs.

The levels of self were indicated by the peaks of colours in the graphs whilst the transition points between the levels of self showed troughs. The latter part concurs with the Sufi idea that there is an 'interval' or gap, called a *bazarkh*, between each level or plane of consciousness in the journey through the levels of self (Harris, 1981).

Clearly during Albedo, the aspirant moves through several peak periods of colour, coinciding with the levels of the Creative, Loving, Wise, Sacred and Pure selves. Finally, the Rubedo phase, which is shorter than the Albedo period, represents the culmination of the retreat. In the successful retreats, colours featured strongly here, thereby confirming the alchemical notion that Rubedo is the 'fruit' of the work, bringing spirit into the body, into life. The increase in the appearance of colour in the retreat dream texts, following the Nigredo phase, confirm the earlier findings of Ehlers (1993).

The comparison of the retreat ranking with retreat experience

No significant link was found between the previous experience of the retreatant and their colour count ratio ranking. However, most of the retreatants who repeated their retreats did show progress in that they accessed more levels of self the second time round. One retreatant, P.W.(vi), who undertook six retreats, recorded a shift in the peak of the colour count towards Rubedo, shown in graph 9. He also recorded a higher colour count (shown in graph 9, in the Rubedo phase) than the peak in his first retreat (P.W.(i) in the Creative self (as shown in graph 7). Two beginners and one experienced retreatant recorded colour count ratios in the top three of the colour count rankings. Some experienced retreatants were ranked in the middle of the colour count rankings. Some beginners were also ranked at the bottom of the colour count rankings. Thus the results showed that the degree of readiness for a psycho-spiritual transformation was an important factor and that it varies from individual to individual. Previous retreat experience was a far less significant factor. Similarly, in the therapeutic context some clients who are looking to make changes in their lives make rapid progress, simply because they are ready for change, whereas others achieve relatively small gains over extended periods of therapy.

Influence of retreat length on the results

Short retreats tended mostly to not reveal all of the levels of self, or all the phases of the process, with two exceptions, S.F. and S.L. Normally, short retreats are designed for beginners in the retreat process, i.e. to undertake a long retreat as a beginner would not necessarily guarantee access to all the levels of self and all the stages. Long retreats were more likely to reveal all the levels of self and all the phases. Intermediate retreats, as expected, tended to have an impact somewhere in-between short and long retreats. However, a long retreat did not necessarily guarantee a greater access to all the levels of self any more than the notion that a retreatant would not experience all the levels of self and all the stages on a short retreat. As emphasised above, the most important factor is the degree of readiness in the retreatant for a psycho-spiritual transformation.

Influence of gender

No significant differences were found between male and female retreatants. The top three in the colour count rankings were female.

Influence of culture

Cultural influences showed up in the use of metaphor but it did not influence the results of the process.

Influence of retreat setting

The retreat setting did not appear to make any significant difference to the results.

Influence of age

Age did not appear to be related to the results. However, this may not prove to be the case for ages under 30 years and over 60 years, since maturity is a factor for those under 30 years of age and physical stamina may well be an inhibiting factor for those over 60 years of age.

Influence of retreat guide

Some retreatants had more than one guide during the retreat. This seemed to have a slight adverse effect on the retreat in that the retreatant adjusted to each new guide. However, the same overall pattern of phases and levels of self were observable. Although the researcher guided 13 of the 23 retreats, this did not seem to make much difference to the colour rankings, e.g. on the colour rankings chart the top two retreatants were guided by other guides. Five of the retreats were guided by several guides in succession, and five retreats were guided by a guide other than the researcher.

It is also of interest to note that, other than the researcher as guide, none of the other retreat guides made any use of the dream experiences, whether reported verbally or by

written record, i.e. they relied purely on the retreatant's personal, conscious experience and on their own intuitive sense of what the retreatant was experiencing as a basis for prescribing the spiritual practices for the retreatant. By contrast, the researcher did make use of the dreams retold to him by the retreatants he was guiding. This acted as a complementary piece of information in addition to the retreatant's conscious experience and the researcher's own intuitive sense. However, this did not appear to make any discernible difference in either the thematic or qualitative analyses. What was more important was that the guides followed the retreatant's process. In one case, the conflict between the guide and the retreatant inhibited the process.

Role of metaphor in the dreams

Several metaphors were common to the retreats, the hermaphrodite, masculine and feminine, gold, silver, sun and moon, shadowy figures, alchemical operations, sound/music, houses, travelling, colours, changes of clothing, directions, children, food, numbers, the guide, healing and food. These metaphors acted as mirrors and indicators of the inner changes the retreatants were undergoing, as the retreat progressed.

Progress of the retreatants over a succession of retreats

Five retreatants undertook more than one retreat. Two retreatants recorded a second retreat but the texts of both their first retreats were discarded as much of the images were recorded during the waking state. (The idea was to analyse the process of the themes and images in the dreams rather than in the waking state.) Four of the retreatants recorded progress from their first to their second retreat. A fifth, P.W., undertook 6 retreats over a period of eight years. One of these was discarded as the dream data was clearly influenced by the conflict between the guide and the retreatant. The latter's retreats showed a maturing process in which the retreatant began to experience all of the phases of the retreat and more of the levels of self.

Increase in light

Results showed a steady increase in the presence of colour and light/dark in the dreams until a peak was reached, whereupon the peak tailed off until the end of the retreat. Examination of graphs 1-19 showed that the retreatants who recorded a high colour frequency count ratio and the more experienced retreatants all recorded the peak of their graphs towards the end of the Albedo or in the Rubedo stage of the retreat, i.e. the build-up of light in these cases continued for most of the retreat, whereas in most of the beginners' retreats (S.F. and S.L. excepted) the peak of colour and light/dark in their dreams was reached early on in the retreat, around the beginning of the Albedo stage. The conclusion was that if there was a significant increase in light for most of the psycho-spiritual transformation process then the aspirant was more likely to access all the levels of self and experience all the phases of the process. Secondly, when comparing successive retreats, if the colour analysis shows a clear shift in the peak of the graph towards the Rubedo end, a definite sign of progress in the psycho-spiritual transformation process is indicated.

Clear Light Dreams and Clear Light Experiences

Two retreatants, S.L., a beginner, and S.F., undertaking her second short retreat, recorded Clear Light dreams. S.F. also recorded a Clear Light experience.

Summary of the Analysis of U.'s dreams

Three successive cycles of dreams were analysed over a period of two years.

Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis produced, in every cycle, very similar themes to those found in the templates for the retreat dreams analysis. Again phases of the retreat and levels of self were evident, as in the retreatants' dream analysis. However, each successive cycle showed the presence of the levels more clearly.

Colour frequency maps and colour count analysis

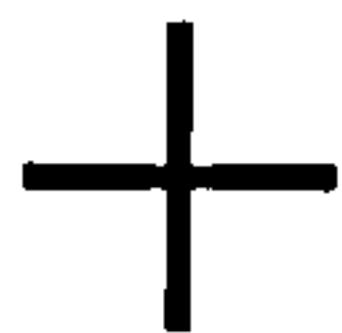
As in the retreatants' dreams, the colour count analysis revealed an increase in light as each cycle progressed, with the peak moving from Albedo in cycle 1 to Rubedo in cycle 3. This paralleled the results shown in the graphs of the retreats, where the peaks of light shifted towards Rubedo with the spiritual maturing of the retreatant. With each successive cycle, the colour and light increased dramatically in the dreams.

Colour combinations in the dream data

Colour combinations were found in U.'s dreams in the second and third cycles of dreams. During cycle 2, the colour combinations occurred between closely related colours such as yellow and orange, red and brown, etc. Gold and silver were the only colours that were clearly opposite each other and that appeared together in a diagram in the dream in cycle 2. In alchemy (Fabricius, 1996), these colours symbolise sun and moon, masculine and feminine. The basic underlying theme of cycle 2 (in looking at the dream text) was in fact the transformation and re-integration of the feminine and masculine aspects of the dreamer's psyche. For example, in terms of directions in the dreams, gold and silver, masculine and feminine, were often situated on the left and right of the dreamer, or in the East and the West of the landscape. Clearly, by the end of cycle 2, there was a resolution of these two opposites taking place in the 'horizontal direction'. In physical terms, this was between her left and right side - in psycho-spiritual terms, between her masculine and feminine sides.

The colour combinations found in the dream imagery in cycle 3 differed from cycle 2 in that the colour combinations were no longer between similar colours (close relationships) or between colours that are next to each other in the colour spectrum - the colour combinations were between colours that were much further apart in the colour spectrum. In fact, they were at opposite ends, e.g. red-blue, white and red. In looking at the dream texts it was clear that the basic underlying theme of cycle 3 was the resolving of the tensions between North and South, mountain peaks and valleys, the head and the base energies of the spine, i.e. a resolving of the tensions between opposites in the vertical direction. Each time the texts showed a resolution of the tensions between these opposites, the very subtle and more earthly levels of

consciousness in U. The result was “As above - so below”. The same conclusion was arrived at in discussions with U., who concurred with this finding. Thus, together, the resolving of the opposites in cycle 2 and cycle 3 indicated a general balancing of the psyche in the form of a cross:



Clear light dreams and Clear Light experiences

Several Clear Light dreams and Clear Light experiences, identified using the Tibetan Buddhist definition of the term, were recorded during the third cycle of U.’s dreams. The Clear Light experiences represented the culmination of the dream work, from the Alchemical, Tibetan Buddhist, Yogic and Sufi points of view, i.e. from this point onwards, dreaming is no longer dreaming in the conventional sense, as the ‘dreamer’ is awake and conscious in the dream state, and yet beyond self-consciousness.

A psycho-spiritual transformation from cycle to cycle: a shift in consciousness

The analysis of U.’s dreams revealed not only a psycho-spiritual transformation within each cycle, but a leap, particularly from cycle 2 to cycle 3 in consciousness in the dreams. It is as though the levels of self, in each successive cycle, were being experienced in an increasingly profound and subtle way - specifically, that the themes of the level of the Wise self were present in every level of self during cycle 3. The themes of the Wise self were not present throughout cycle 2 or 1, with the obvious exception that the level of the Wise self appeared in sequence between the Loving self and the Sacred self. In the Sufi tradition this is known as a change of *maqdam*, or a change of spiritual station (Tosun Bayrak, 1998).

Summary of the analysis of the case of a psycho-spiritual transformation presented by Jung

This analysis involved two cycles of dreams. As in U.'s case, cycle 2 proved to be a more profound cycle of transformation than cycle 1, although the phases of the process and the levels of self appeared in both cycles - in the case of cycle 2, all the phases and most of the levels of self appeared, compared to cycle 1 in which only two of the four possible phases of transformation appeared. During cycle 2, Jung's client appeared to experience a shift in his consciousness during the level of the Wise self. The effect of this shift persisted through to the end of cycle 2. As with the case of U., Jung's client experienced a balancing of his psyche in terms of the horizontal and vertical directions in the dreams.

Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis revealed the themes of the levels of self as being very similar to those of U.'s and of the retreatants' dreams. A colour analysis of colour count vs. time was not possible because no recorded dates of when the dreams occurred were available.

Consistency of the results between the retreats, the dreams off-retreat and the case presented by Jung

The consistency of the results between the retreatants' dreams, the long term study of U.'s dreams and the case study of Jung is evidence for the existence of an underlying structure of consciousness, described as the levels of self in this study. However, each individual experience of retreat was unique. Each person has their own inner journey. Furthermore, the deeper the retreatant went into themselves, and the longer the retreat and the more retreats they undertook, the more evidence emerged for the existence of this underlying structure of consciousness.

9.2 The most significant findings from the retreat dreams analysis

This is the first investigation into the role that dreams play during a solo spiritual retreat, wherein the retreatant has an opportunity to experience a psycho-spiritual transformation. Similarly, no research study has been undertaken to investigate formally the different subtle levels of consciousness that one may encounter during a psycho-spiritual transformation process. Various investigators in the field of dreams have speculated on or suggested or referred to the existence of such levels (Edinger, 1995; Etevenon, 2004). In the field of transpersonal psychology (Wilber, Engler & Brown, 1986) the evidence has centred on traditional mystical descriptions of such states (Corbin, 1969; Norbu, 1992). Thirdly, no research has been undertaken in which dreams are used as a vehicle to link the Eastern psycho-spiritual ideas concerning the levels of consciousness with the Western psychological ideas about transformation as a process (Jung, 1968).

The retreat dreams study has also been compared with two long-term naturalistic dream studies of people who underwent a psycho-spiritual transformation. All the results show a similar pattern, namely, that the psycho-spiritual transformation process can be seen as having four major stages. Initially the neophyte experiences a descent into the dark, instinctual unconscious, called Nigredo in alchemy. If they persist and stay with the process, an ascent in consciousness will eventually occur, called the Albedo stage, resulting in the experience of a series of subtle levels of self. If the neophyte is capable, they may experience a transcendental state of no self, or a disintegration of the self. This stage, called Citrinitas, can lead to a mystical experience of the Divine. In most cases, the neophyte 'misses' Citrinitas, returning in the Rubedo stage back to the world via a descent in consciousness through the levels of self until all aspects of the experience have been integrated, and the process ends. The model that describes the orthogonal nature of the 'horizontal process' of the stages and the 'transcending ascent/descent of consciousness' is described in Chapter 2, in the theory and nature of spiritual retreats. To date, nobody has combined these two orthogonal streams as two dimensions in the transformation process.

Details of the stages and levels of self encountered in the process are listed in the templates 1-8 and in the 'thick descriptions' of the levels of self that follow.

Further, certain basic psychological issues, each associated with a particular level of self, have to be overcome, before the corresponding level of self can be accessed. Typically, these were the overcoming of the pull of the instinctual nature (Nigredo), the rediscovery of the Creative (Creative self), the lesson of Love (Loving self), the struggle for an authentic sense of self (Wise self), the lesson of self-image (Sacred self) and the lesson of forgiveness, overcoming guilt and resentment (Pure self). However, in a few exceptional cases, no evidence of psychological issues were present where the retreatants had a profound spiritual experience, i.e. when they clearly accessed the transcendental level of 'no self', and recorded 'clear light experiences'.

The quantitative analysis revealed that the increasing experience of light in the dreams and when awake during the retreat served as an indicator of the progress of the psycho-spiritual transformation process, as did the increasing presence of colour, subtle colour, bright colours and colour combinations that appeared in the dreams.

The quantitative analysis also revealed a means of comparing and ranking the degree of transformation experienced during the retreat. However, this did not tally with the degree of retreat experience or exposure to the Sufi perspective on the part of the retreatant. Instead, the readiness of the retreatant for such a transformation, as though they had been "on the threshold" of such an experience, was the most significant factor. Some retreatants, who had little experience of or exposure to either Sufism or the retreat process, had a profound spiritual experience, accessing all the listed levels of self during their retreat. Others, who had several years' experience of both, gained insights and made progress in accessing the levels of self, but without experiencing a profound psycho-spiritual transformation.

In Chapter One, the criteria for a psycho-spiritual transformation experience were outlined. In terms of the results of the analysis, those ranked in the top three of the colour count rankings in Table 5.1 clearly experienced the listed criteria more profoundly than those ranked in the lower half of the Table. In fact, there was a large gap in the degree to which S.F., N.L. and S.L. experienced the process compared to K. and J.(i) at the bottom. However, what was surprising was that of these five retreats,

only N.L. was an experienced retreatant, whereas the other four were relative beginners in the process. Thus, the degree of transformation depends mostly on the readiness of the retreatant, it is not something that the retreatant can wilfully induce by subjecting themselves to a long retreat. Of the long retreats, S. recorded the highest theme count and colour count ranking. This accorded with the researcher's view, having studied the dream texts, that it was the most profound of the three long retreats (although long retreats are bound to have an impact on the retreatant). This was clear from all three of the dream texts. In fact, each retreatant who participated in the retreat programme experienced their retreats as meaningful, albeit in their own unique way, which is perhaps as important a point as the differences between the retreatant's experiences.

From an objective point of view, however, the colour count and theme count rankings give some idea of the comparative degrees of success in the psycho-spiritual transformation process, although figures such as colour count ratios and theme count ratios are only approximate, and do not replace the value of the subjective experience of the retreatant. Perhaps the only truly objective assessment of transformation was the accessing of the levels of self and the degree to which the retreatant accessed each level. Such an assessment of course only has meaning in a comparable sense when a batch of results are listed together.

9.3 The most significant findings from U.'s long term 'off-retreat' study

The 'off retreat' case study of U.'s dreams not only confirmed the findings of retreat dreams analysis, but it revealed the fact that the psycho-spiritual transformation process is not necessarily limited to a single cycle of transformation (reflected in the dreams). Instead, it showed the presence of several cycles of transformation, with each successive cycle showing an 'acceleration' of the transformation process.

The analysis of U.'s dreams compared three successive dream cycles. Each cycle revealed the same pattern of stages and levels of self, as in the retreat dream texts. However, each subsequent cycle seemed to have taken a leap forward in terms of depth and in terms of the increase in the presence of light in the dreams. Furthermore, each cycle seemed to retrace the levels of self, but in much greater depth. Finally, the

3rd cycle seemed to consist of dreams in which each level of self was being experienced and contained within the level of the Wise self, i.e. the Wise self themes were present at the same time as the themes of each successive level of self.

The explanation for this appears that in going from cycle 2 to cycle 3 an inner 'leap of consciousness' occurred, in her waking and dream state. Thus in cycle 3 she began dreaming at a 'higher level of consciousness' than before (in cycle 2). Although the third cycle included her journey through all the levels of self, these dreams were now 'housed' or 'contained' within the level of the 'Wise self', i.e. now the levels of self were being experienced through the 'Wise self'. Following on from cycle 3, U. has experienced moving into a fourth cycle of dreams, but the dreams (and the levels of self being transited) seem now to be contained in the level of the 'Sacred self'. This data has not been included in this study as it is incomplete, but it does suggest the idea of a fundamental shift in consciousness taking place between cycles. An example illustrating this point, that is to say, changing levels of consciousness in dreams, is discussed below, the difference in this example being that the shift takes place consciously within one dream. Nevertheless, the possibility of making a profound leap in consciousness within a dream and experiencing the dream process at profoundly different 'depths' is shown.

Along with the increase in light in cycle three, there was a sudden increase in colour combinations of opposite colours. U. also began to experience not only lucidity in her dreams but she recorded her first Clear Light dreams. In addition, many dreams began to show the increasing presence of light in the imagery (Table 7.6). The researcher named these 'Clear Light experiences' - as distinct from 'Clear Light' dreams. It seemed as though she had begun to have her dreams function at a more profound psychic level. During this third cycle she experienced much of what the Yogis call Kundalini phenomena, sensations in the areas of the chakras in the body, particularly upon waking from the dreams. The colour combinations seemed to be closely associated with the combining of the psychic energies of the lower and higher chakras - in cycle 2 the colour combinations related to balancing the masculine and feminine energies in herself and related, in terms of physical direction, to the left and right side of her body. Now the top part - the head, and the lower parts - the base and the sacrum energy centres, were being conjoined. All of this is explained in terms of

both the Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi models of spiritual awakening, using dreams as a guide.

Two examples of Clear Light dreams and Clear Light experiences were recorded by U., 28.4.01 and 7.2.02 (see Appendix VIII). The second of these two contained an interesting commentary by U. as shown in Dream Data Sheet 9.1:

Dream Data Sheet 9.1: Commentary by U. on 7.2.02

"This dream left an extremely deep impression on me, which has been with me since. It came at 5am. I was alone in our house in the mountains, snowed in, knowing that I would have to wade through the snow in the dark at 6.30am, holding a flashlight, to get to the station, then lead a full day's meeting with the teachers' team, another meeting in the evening with the board of directors, and be back late at night, totally exhausted. In the hours I couldn't get to sleep the evening before, I wondered why I got myself into such a situation, when life could be so easy. Now I think that maybe there needs to be high pressure and responsibility in outer life to trigger such a dream experience.

What is new in this dream is that I moved through different spheres and felt in the dream that I was moving to these places.

1. *Outer reality: me in bed, alone in a cold house standing on a mountain slope. That felt quite unreal when I woke up.*
2. *"Usual" dream level: feels not much different from outer reality. Beginning: with P. in an exhibition, end: with P. in the garage.*
3. *Deeper level: feels like a dream compared to level 2. From the moment I leave P. on the doorstep and follow the Master, until the moment of my Aha at the end. I realise that I am "different" and that nobody will understand or believe my experience.*
4. *Outside of time and space: I lose my sense, experiences of colours and light. Maybe there is a 5th level when I open my eyes, sort of wake up in that state, and the light continues.*

I move in through these spheres and out again in reverse order."

This was the first time U. became conscious of moving through the spheres of consciousness. It would seem that the usual dream level gave way to a level which the Tibetan Buddhists call a 'dream of clarity' in which the dreamer is conscious of

dreaming. The next level deepens in consciousness to become a 'Clear Light' dream with the turning of the image to pure light. The fourth level is outside of time and space. Then she woke up remaining in the same state of consciousness.

This dream example stands out because, even though the dreamer moves through different spheres or levels of consciousness, she does not 'ascend' the ladder of the six levels of self as evidenced in the retreat dream texts. Instead, it is as though she takes extremely large leaps in consciousness, from the outer world to the dream level, to a profound level of dreaming to a transcendental level. Perhaps this is possible once the aspirant has begun to access the transcendental level, as in the dream of 28.4.01. As pointed out in the discussion below on contemporary views on dreaming, this dream provides further evidence for Gillespie's (2002) notion that in presentational symbolism, the dream imagery simulates the lived inner experience of the dream and that the sensation of moving, in this case consciously moving in and out through the different spheres of consciousness, are real experiences, not simulations of anything remembered from the outer life.

In comparing the above experience of U. with the retreatants it is only in S.F. that anything vaguely similar was experienced during the retreat process. And yet, S.F. was a beginner and hers was a short retreat. By contrast, P.W., who undertook several retreats over an eight year period, did not 'break through' from sphere to sphere the way U. did. Yet he did mature and progress over this period. Similarly other retreatants, such as M.H. and R.J., who each undertook two successive retreats, all matured and were able to access more subtle levels of self and in some cases complete more of the alchemical stages of the retreat in their second retreat. Once again this suggests that 'spiritual awakening' cannot be forced upon a person nor can it be self-generated by personal will. It is a natural process - very much like cognitive development in a child, the difference being that in the latter case the mind is involved, whereas in the former case the awakening of the spirit within the human psyche seems to be involved. To sum up, whilst the case of U. strengthened the evidence regarding dreams as a tracker of the stages and levels of self in the transformation process, the most significant finding was the phenomenon of shifts or leaps in consciousness.

9.4 An explanation for the differences in the theme count ratios when comparing short, intermediate and long retreats

The colour count ratios in Table 5.1 gave a ranking for each retreat according to the degree of transformation. The criteria for such a transformation were outlined in Chapter One (page 9). These results made sense since the retreats ranked at the top did experience a significant degree of transformation, while those ranked at the bottom did not. In reviewing the chart, therefore, the rankings of each retreat seemed ‘about right’. However, the results of the theme count ratios in Table 5.4 seemed to diverge from the results of Table 5.1. The theme count ratios in Table 5.4 show that the long retreats were the least successful and that the short retreats were the most successful, with the intermediate retreats being ‘in-between’.

However, when the retreats are separated out and ranked according to short, intermediate and long retreats, their colour count rankings agree with their theme count rankings. Thus, the theme count ratios (with colour count ranking alongside) in Table 5.6 were divided into short, intermediate and long retreats. Once again, these three ‘sub-charts’ made sense in terms of their theme count ranking and the degree of transformation shown in the dream texts.

Further examination of Table 5.4 and of the Graphs showing the periods for each level of self, for each retreat, reveals the explanation. Short retreats ranked near the bottom of their section in Table 5.7 (Si.L., H., A.L., M.H.(ii) and K.) all registered several themes in either the Creative or Loving self, where virtually most of the retreat time was spent, therefore, recording a higher theme count spread for a relatively short period of time. Not surprisingly, then, short retreats gave a higher theme count ratio compared to intermediate and long-term retreats. Secondly,

time

although long retreats accessed far more subtle levels of self than the short retreats (with the exception of S.F. and S.L.), yet they spent much of the retreat time transiting these levels of self, yielding relatively low theme count ratios. Thus, although the

time

long retreats recorded more themes overall, their ratio of theme count vs. time was lower.

9.5 The possibility of retreatants accessing the more subtle levels of self

On reviewing the dream texts, the retreatants who undertook long retreats generally accessed not only more subtle levels of self than those who undertook short retreats (S.F. and S.L. were exceptions) but they also went much deeper into their process, encountering much more subtle aspects of their psyches. It is also clear that in some cases, J.(i) and J.(ii), the retreatant was simply not able to access the very subtle levels of the Pure self or transcendental consciousness in the waking state or even in the dreams.

It follows therefore that the retreats ranked much higher in the colour count and theme count charts, Tables 5.1 and 5.7, scored higher in the theme counts for the more subtle levels of self than the retreats which were lower down in those charts. Conversely, there is a marked reduction in the theme count for the subtler levels of self in those retreats that are nearer the bottom of the colour count and theme count charts.

This result therefore supports the idea that a retreatant who is experiencing some kind of spiritual awakening is more likely to be aware of the subtler levels in their process of transformation than those retreats who do not undergo a profound transformation experience. Instead the latter, in only experiencing the Creative self for example, simply has a relatively uneventful (internally, that is) retreat. In fact, even if the retreatant undertakes a very long retreat, unless they undergo a sufficient degree of transformation, they are unlikely to perceive the subtler levels of self consciously or in their dreams.

9.6 The experience of light in the psycho-spiritual transformation process

The phenomenon of the increase of colour and light in the dreams as the retreats progressed, or in the case of U. as each cycle progressed, is regarded as an indication of the degree of transformation in alchemy (Jung, 1968). In the few cases that a non-physical light was experienced in the waking state (S.F. and S.L.), or continuing from the dream state to the waking state (cycle 3, U.'s dreams), it involved the loss of the sense of self (no sense of body, no personal feeling, no thoughts, no awareness of self

as an individual) which was replaced by an overwhelming sense of brilliant light, peace, and sublimeness of consciousness.

The alchemical texts of Paracelsus speak of the 'Light of Nature' as an inner knowledge that is revealed to us and that it can also relate to our own nature. Paracelsus also sees the human being as both mortal and immortal. "Man is also an angel as he has all the latter's qualities." He sees the light of nature as an intuitive apprehension of the facts, a kind of illumination (Jung, 1983).

Corbin (1990) reports that the Iranian Sufi tradition saw our ultimate human experience as a Being of Light, or being conscious of our celestial counterpart. Bucke (1923) has documented numerous cases of mystical experiences in which the subject either experienced the presence of a light (without any apparent source) or experienced themselves as a 'Being of Light'. It would seem therefore that in the absence of any rational explanation we need to accept the existence of such experiences. They have a meaning and validity known only to the one who experienced it themselves.

Since this experience of light has meaning and value to the one who experiences the phenomenon, it seems important therefore to accept the importance of their experience and that it can have a relevance to their lives. In the cases of each of the three retreatants who had such an experience of light, it had a significant impact on them, more so than any other experience on the retreat. Descriptions of the experience included a sense of total peace, bliss, utter joy that lasted for some time after the event.

This study has made use of the criteria set out in Chapter One for a psycho-spiritual transformation. However, the clear light experiences referred to by the three participants necessitates the inclusion of a new criterion, in addition to those already mentioned in Chapter One. This would then say that:

A profound psycho-spiritual transformation experience includes a transcendental experience of light, experienced from the dream to the waking state. This involves the loss of the sense of self (no sense of body, no personal feeling, no thoughts, no

awareness of self as an individual) which was replaced by an overwhelming sense of brilliant light, peace and sublimeness of consciousness.

Traditionally, psychology has reported these experiences as being pathological by nature, or referred to them as mystical experiences ‘which have no place in psychology’ (Jung, 1968). It seems odd however to include some but not all of human experiences in a study of human psychology. Instead, even though we may not fully understand the nature of such experiences, or where they come from, particularly because they are so rare, we need a psychological approach, a Transpersonal Psychology, which can acknowledge this as a natural human experience, free of delusion or pathology. Such experiences have significant value and meaning to the one who is fortunate enough to experience it. Psychology will be enriched by including them as natural human experiences.

9.7 The role of colour in the process, as they appeared in the dream texts

The colour analysis revealed the imagaic role that colour plays in the visual metaphors contained in the dream texts. This phenomenon was noticeable from the outset to the completion of the process. Initially the darker colours, brown, dark red and black, appeared in Nigredo. However, in Albedo, several of the lighter colours of the spectrum appeared. White and green, gold, red, blue and silver and light were more prominent than brown, yellow, pink, purple and grey and black or black and white. Of these, white was the most prominent, whilst black and white together in the same image or same dream signified a major resolution of opposites in the dreamer’s psyche. In Rubedo, if that stage was reached in the process, the dream texts tended to show a profusion of colours, from red through to purple, gold and silver. The appearance of this colour sequence seems to support the alchemical view (Jung, 1968; Dahlenburg, 1993) that the Nigredo stage tends to be black or dark, the Albedo stage is predominantly white, and in the Citrinitas/Rubedo stage red and gold are prominent and/or all the colours of the spectrum appear in it. Jung (1968) points out that this use of colour to depict the transformation process is universal.

Gold and silver were found to represent the completion of the balancing of the masculine and feminine aspects of the psyche. Classically, gold and silver are said to symbolise the perfect balance of soul and spirit.

Finally, the phenomenon of colour combinations, contained within a visual metaphor, seemed to symbolise the conjoining of different or opposing aspects or qualities within the psyche.

9.8 The validity of human experience as research material

This research project was not set up as an experiment. Instead its aim was to attempt to capture the experience of retreat through the recorded dreams and vice versa, to see if the dreams reflected the changes in the process as well as the changes in the levels of consciousness during the psycho-spiritual transformation.

In looking at the dream texts the themes are shown on the sides of the dream texts. It is therefore possible to follow the process of the retreatant day by day, as in a narrative or story. If therefore we assume for the moment the possibility of some of the data being fantasy or wish fulfilment, then this would be reflected in the dreams. If the dream material was simply fantasy it would be less likely to retain a consistent order in the narrative, let alone show a consistency in the order of presentation of the retreat stages and the levels of self in going from retreat to retreat. Even though each retreat dream narrative was a unique story in itself, the vast majority of the data showed similar archetypal themes throughout each retreatant's process. In fact, the development of these themes showed an inherent structure of consciousness, labelled 'Levels of Self' in this study. There were two cases (M.H.(i) and R.J.(i)) where waking imagery in the retreat was rejected as unreliable data, since the former can be affected by the conscious mind, whereas dreams reflect the imagery of the unconscious. In one case, (P.W.(iv)), where the retreatant clearly experienced a conflict with the retreat guide, the data was rejected.

Thus, if the dreams were able to clearly describe the transformation process, then the consistency of this dream data also provided clear evidence for the psycho-spiritual transformation process to be considered as a valid human experience in much the

same way as a client's reporting of their experiences in psychotherapy is accepted as being a valid reflection of the therapeutic process.

In addition, the retreat dreams are a record of the participants' personal and transcendental dream experiences. Concerning the latter the dream state can also be considered as a vehicle for the transcendental experience, i.e. whilst we cannot properly describe and quantify the reality of such experiences we can recognise and value their reality through the vehicles which transmit them (Valle, 1998), i.e. the transcendental nature needs a vehicle to communicate through in order to be experienced. Jung (1968) goes even further by saying in his introduction that those who believe in God or who recognise and believe in the reality of the transcendental should not be surprised at the apparently divine nature of some of their dreams. *"So the believer should not boggle at the fact that these are somnia a Deo missa (dreams sent by God) and illuminations of the soul which cannot be traced back to any external causes."* (Jung, 1968, p.19). Jung also refers to these experiences as archetypal experiences:

"Psychology is concerned with the act of seeing and not with the construction of new religious truths, when even the existing teachings have not yet been perceived and understood. In religious matters it is a well-known fact that we cannot understand a thing until we have experienced it inwardly, for it is in the inward experience that the connection between the psyche and the outward image or creed is first revealed as a relationship or correspondence like that of sponsus and sponsa. Accordingly when I say as a psychologist that God is an archetype, I mean by that the "type" in the psyche. The word "type" is, as we know, derived from τύπος, "blow" or "imprint"; thus an archetype presupposes an imprinter. Psychology as the science of the soul has to confine itself to its subject and guard against overstepping its proper boundaries by metaphysical assertions or other professions of faith. Should it set up a God, even as a hypothetical cause, it would have implicitly claimed the possibility of proving God, thus exceeding its competence in an absolutely illegitimate way. Science can only be science; there are no "scientific" professions of faith and similar contradictiones in adiecto. We simply do not know the ultimate derivation of the archetype any more than we know the origin of the psyche. The competence

of psychology as an empirical science only goes so far as to establish, on the basis of comparative research, whether for instance the imprint found in the psyche can or cannot reasonably be termed a "God-image". Nothing positive or negative has thereby been asserted about the possible existence of God, any more than the archetype of the "hero" posits the actual existence of a hero.

Now if my psychological researches have demonstrated the existence of certain psychic types and their correspondence with well-known religious ideas, then we have opened up a possible approach to those experienceable contents which manifestly and undeniably form the empirical foundations of all religious experience." (Jung, 1968, p.13, 14.)

In following the above argument this thesis contends, therefore, that the transcendental experiences contained in the retreat dreams cannot in themselves be quantified or assessed, but in the context of the retreat process they reveal an important aspect in the retreatant's transformation. These stories contain the growing presence of the transcendental as the retreat proceeded. If their human experiences are accepted as valid, then the process of their transformation, which includes the experience of the divine, must also be accepted. The retreats also showed a specific order in the appearance of the different levels of subtle self, with each representing an increasingly subtle level of consciousness. Similarly, this phenomenon can be accepted as evidence for the existence of an inner structure of consciousness, which is experienced during a psycho-spiritual transformation process. This structure is also psychically located in and related to the activation of the subtle energy centres, the chakras, in Buddhist and Yoga traditions, or the lataif in the Sufi tradition.

9.9 Validity and limitations of the dream data

In the research design, in the research methods used and in the analysis, the researcher has tried to ensure the authenticity and reliability of the research data. One important point to stress concerning the validity of the data is that the dream data gathered for this thesis was unsolicited, i.e. it was not elicited through questions, prompting or discussion, as is the case in interview data, which is the accepted basis of much psychological research. None of the retreatants chose to do a retreat because of the

inclusion of the use of dreams in the retreat, or that it was part of a PhD research project. They chose to undertake a retreat because they wanted to experience the retreat process itself. Remembering and recording the dreams was a secondary task. The primary task was the following of the spiritual practices in order to experience a psycho-spiritual transformation. It was stressed to the retreatants by the guides that it was not important to 'have a dream' or 'remember a dream' but, if they did recall a dream, then they would agree to record it.

However, several potential criticisms of the validity of the data need to be discussed and answered. For example, could the data have been fitted to agree with a preconceived idea about the levels of self? Were the retreatants influenced in any way beforehand or during the retreat or in their recording of their dreams by the researcher or by previous exposure to a spiritual tradition that espouses the idea of the planes of consciousness?

The dream data used to construct the templates for the levels of self was drawn from the dream texts only. However, the researcher's prior retreat experience and knowledge of the Sufi and Buddhist traditions provided a means of recognising the themes that were present in the dream texts, for each step of the process. Without this prior knowledge and experience, it would have been considerably more difficult to have sifted out and collated the significant themes of the levels of self from a purely psychological point of view. For example, one could have focussed simply on the psychological factors present in the dreams and used the themes found in the steps or 'level of self', as these were named, as a means of expounding on the psychological issues being worked on in the retreat process. This argument however does not take into account the order in which these psychological issues present themselves, i.e. the instinctual forces which appear in the dreams initially and then disappear once the process of Albedo is in full swing. The mental constructs in the dreamer's mind appear at the beginning of albedo in the Creative self, but disappear in the Loving self. The most dramatic conflicts appear in the Wise self but there is no way of explaining psychologically why they should appear at this point. Finally, why would the disappearance of psychological problems from the dreams in Citrinitas give way to transcendental like experiences? Neither does the psychological argument take into account the increasing presence of light in the dreams to the extent that in cycle 3 of

U.'s dreams she actually records transcendental experiences of light, with no sense of self whatsoever. Psychotherapy theory (Kohut, 1971; Klein, 1984; Winnicott, 1958; Freud, 1965; Adler, 1966; Jung, 1964) always assumes a sense of self or a fragmented sense of self (which is a state of psychosis) to be intrinsic to the human psyche. In U.'s example, there was no sense of self and yet she was conscious, balanced and aware of nothing but light.

Theory, and in this case, the theory of retreats or the theory of psycho-spiritual transformations, is used as an attempt to explain the apparent patterns or order in the transformation process. Given the personal experiences and background knowledge of the researcher, the researcher accepts that there may be to some extent (unwittingly) the tendency to emphasise the existing subtle structure of consciousness in the results so that the results readily make sense and can be explained. However, no theory is perfect, and even less so at the outset of its creation. Subsequent research into new areas of knowledge always causes us to modify the theoretical ideas. This is repeated until such time as the theory explains the data satisfactorily and the vast majority of researchers can verify this. Much later new data may expose the flaws of the theory and so another change in the theory is needed (Kuhn, 1970.).

In the meantime, however, the theory of the retreat process, as proposed earlier in this thesis, seems to the researcher to be the best available explanation for the results found in the dream texts, i.e. the changing stages and levels of consciousness (re-named levels of self) encountered by the retreatants were apparent when reading the dream texts. The researcher also acknowledges that the influence of his own background in retreat experience in the Sufi tradition and a familiarity with the Tibetan Buddhist literature can act as an aid and as a potential hindrance when reading the texts. It is inevitable of course that there will be, to some extent, an unconscious 'fitting of the data to meet the theory' but the author has attempted, through the diverse dream data sources and through the triangulation of research methods, through reading and re-reading of the dreams and the analysis, to present as accurate a picture of the model as possible, given the limitations of the study design. It is interesting to note that recently another dream researcher has suggested the existence of an inherent structure of consciousness, i.e. levels of consciousness, that

can be accessed through dreams. This paper was based on the experiences of the mystic Sri Aurobindo and the dream research of Patricia Garfield (Etevenon, 2004).

A second question arises. Were the participants influenced in any way by the researcher, or by the retreat 'culture', or by prior knowledge of the process? This point has been addressed in the analysis by showing the calculation of the very low correlation between retreat experience and the colour count ratios. The results showed that some beginners recorded the best colour count ratios in the ranking of the retreats, other beginners were at the bottom of the rankings. Some experienced retreatants were ranked higher in the colour count ratios and some were ranked lower down. The conclusion was that the level of retreat experience does not correlate with the degree of transformation, as reflected in the colour count ratio rankings. In other words, the influence of the retreat 'culture' and of prior knowledge/experience did not have a significant impact on the results. Lastly, different guides were involved in some of the retreats and yet no pattern favouring any one guide was found; it would seem therefore that whatever influence there was by way of the retreat guide, prior knowledge and/or experience, or through the retreat culture, was minimal, and that it had no significant impact upon the results.

If anything, it would seem that the psycho-spiritual transformation process has its 'own time' and that it cannot be hurried, improved or be made more successful by the will of the retreatant, the influence of the guide, the knowledge of the retreatant or even the length of the retreat. However, it is also true to say that the process is not arbitrary. Slow steady progress was observable from year to year in all the cases of successive retreats.

9.10 Can personal (psycho-spiritual) transformation be assessed or measured?

As this study has chosen the alchemical model of transformation as the basis for the theory of retreats, Jung's comments on the process will be used as a basis for assessing the degree of psycho-spiritual transformation, although this was not included in the research question. However, before we can proceed with the idea of assessing a psycho-spiritual transformation process, the phenomena that accompanies the process, and which is being used as the data for assessment, needs to be discussed.

According to Jung (1968), the alchemical process produces a personal or psycho-spiritual transformation in the participant that results in a greatly enhanced 'perception' of light. The perception of this light begins by being 'sensed' through the imagination, i.e. it appears through the aspirant's imagery in terms of light and colour. It also appears through the imagery of the retreatant's dreams. The dream texts showed that in some cases, however, this 'perception' of light increased to the point that the retreatant no longer needed to rely on his or her active imagination to 'perceive' this light, they actually began to 'perceive' it with their eyes closed and in rare cases even when their eyes are open, i.e. the colours or coloured light was seen with the eyes shut and with the eyes opened. This light was 'co-present' with the visually sensed objects of the external world, when looking with opened eyes. This kind of light has been described as the 'inner light' that is sensed by the 'subtile' senses (Corbin, 1969).

Ib'n Arabi calls this ability to see the same light (or vision or images) with the eyes closed or open as 'sound perception' - hinting that this is a sure sign of seeing presence of the more 'subtle inner world' as a subtle extension of the external, physical world, i.e. that our external perception of the world is enhanced by the appearance of this 'inner light' in the outer and inner worlds of our sense perception (Harris, 1981). Ib'n Arabi goes further to say that the subtle realm is primary to and exists independently of the physical world, which is its counterpart. This coincides with Bohm's idea of realms of enfolded light, of which this world is but a realm of light energy compacted in a solid form (Bohm, 1980). From the point of view of psychiatry however, the ability to see beyond the physical would be regarded as hallucinatory - a sign of schizophrenia (Hamilton, 2001). However, Sanella (1987) argues that this could be an example of the 'Kundalini phenomenon' - the word 'Kundalini' being a Sanskrit word used in the Vedic tradition of India to explain the process of spiritual awakening in energetic terms, i.e. that such an awakening unleashes the Kundalini energy, a 'fiery energy' in the aspirant which contributes to the experience of visions and the hearing of strange sounds and voices. This, Sanella says, is to be clearly distinguished from psychosis, in which the sense of self has broken down, unleashing a kind of inner chaos, mentally and emotionally. In a psychotic episode we lose touch with objective reality. By contrast, people who

experience a spiritual awakening do not lose touch with the objective world despite the fact that they hear and see things that those others around them cannot see or hear (Hamilton, 2001).

In three cases (S.F., S.L. and V.), all of which were ranked in the top grouping of the colour count ratio chart, retreatants reported the phenomena of hearing voices and seeing light and visions during their retreats. By contrast, retreats listed lower down in the ranking of the colour frequency chart and who experienced a less significant degree of transformation, reported little or no such phenomena. In the case of U., she reported voices and seeing light in cycle 3 in her dreams and upon waking up. This data was accepted and included when assessing the transformative experiences of the participants.

As it turned out, however, by developing a quantitative method of analysing the dream data, a means of assessing the degree of transformation was afforded.

Now, initially, the object of this study was not to measure personal transformation, it was to see if dreams can mirror or monitor the experience. However, if we are to attempt some kind of measure of this transformation process, then it needs to be a measure of the increasing presence of light experienced by the retreatant during the retreat. It should be, as Jung suggests, in terms of the increasing presence of light and of the increasing clarity and meaningfulness of dreams and visions if the retreat model of transformation adopted in this study is to be considered as valid, i.e. the measure of transformation should be in terms of the increasing presence of light as the phases of the retreat and the planes of consciousness or levels of self are being experienced by the retreatant. As it happened, the analysis of the appearance of light and colour in dreams, which was used as a means of cross-checking the thematic analysis, was then also used as a measure of the retreatant's transformation process. A measure of the increasing presence of colour and light in the retreat was made and presented in a chart of ranked retreats (Table 5.1). The colour analysis also clearly revealed the presence of the levels of self and of the phases experienced during the transformation process (graphs 1-21). Thus the need for a more objective analytical method resulted in a tool for comparing the degree of transformation in each retreat.

No attempt was made to encourage the retreatants to record their experience of transformation during the retreat, although some did choose to do so. However, this information was compared with the colour frequency count chart. It was noticeable then that the retreats ranked in the top group of the colour frequency count chart demonstrated profound changes in their dream content between the beginning and end of the retreat. The journal notes recorded by some of the retreatants did show a profound change in their sense of self by the end of the retreat. By contrast, the further down the ranking of colour frequency count in the chart, the less profound were the changes – in fact in the bottom group the changes only varied from ‘little change’ to ‘insignificant’. Basically, then, the chart of colour frequency count could be regarded as a guide or comparative measure of personal transformation on retreat.

In conclusion, it could therefore be stated that although personal transformation was only being monitored (by dreams) and was not being measured when recording the data, that the colour frequency chart acts as a comparative measure of the transformation experience.

9.11 A new theory of dreams

The results of this study have demonstrated the role of dreams in the study of human transformation. They have also opened up questions about the limits of the existing dream theories. The positivistic neuro-psychological view cannot account for the enormous variety of dream imagery that occurs between different people, even when they are subject to the same environmental conditions. Neither can it account for the levels of consciousness encountered in a psycho-spiritual transformation process. Freud’s dream theory marks a beginning by incorporating the instinctual level as the source of some of the dreams encountered by people. However, by seeing all dreams as having a biological origin he ignores the multi-dimensional nature of homo-sapiens. Jung’s dream theory, in drawing on alchemical symbolism, seems to be able to describe the stages of a psycho-spiritual transformation process, as well as identifying the purpose to be that of individuation. Unfortunately, Jung, for professional reasons, chose to eschew the mystical dimensions in his psychological writings (Jung, 1968), thereby restricting the spiritual dimension to conform to his psychological theory. However, in referring to the visionary and dream experiences

of several alchemists, he acknowledges the notion of an ascent in consciousness during the process (Jung, 1983). This thesis has appeared to extend Jung's ideas by incorporating the notion that the subtle levels of self that are encountered during this 'ascent' are archetypal and that these levels participate in the dreams of transformation, acting in part as a source of the dreams, as well as a blending in with the psychological aspects of the dreamer. This accounts for the typical psycho-spiritual themes that appear in the templates for each level of self. It is possible, therefore, to offer an explanation as to the source of dreams, and to present a new theory of dreams.

The source of dreams

Dreams seem to originate from the interaction between the worldly impressions of everyday life and the innate archetypal dimensions of consciousness that lie within the human psyche. These dimensions have been something of a mystery in the past and are sometimes referred to as the mythological part of the human psyche (Jung, 1964) (a psychological view), or as mysticism (a spiritual view) (Norbu, 1992; Corbin, 1969). However, neither viewpoint is complete in its explanation of the phenomena experienced in the dreams.

The majority of dreams that are recorded seem to be influenced by either the impressions of our worldly life or our own personal preoccupations, our world view and our interests, and that the presence of the constant archetypal input from 'within' is therefore overshadowed by these impressions. Jung called this the personal unconscious, as opposed to the archetypal collective unconscious. However, we can also remember the occasional dream in which the archetypal/spiritual dimensions have entered our conscious memories with a distinctly unworldly, impersonal impression. Normally we dismiss such dreams as being 'odd'. But when a series of such 'odd' dreams is remembered, and their impact is such that we find our world views and our perception of life changes, then we have the possibility that a psycho-spiritual transformation process of our psyche has begun, the purpose of which perhaps is to awaken us to and to begin to incorporate something of these archetypal spiritual dimensions. Jung called this the emergence of the collective unconscious into the realm of our personal unconscious. A note of assurance on this point comes

from Huston (1998) who concurred with Jung's findings that archetypal dreams were experienced by people with a healthy psychological development, unlike people with neurotic personality characteristics who did not have archetypal dreams. Now a retreat would provide the possibility for such an experience, or a long illness, a near death experience, even 'mid-life crisis', i.e. any experience that 'breaks' up the routine of our everyday life, opens up the personal unconscious to an experience of the archetypal collective realms. At this point dreams reflect these inner archetypal dimensions, and the personal unconscious tries to incorporate or personalise them in the dream images. However, during the process, several levels of self are transited in the subsequent ascent (Albedo) and descent (Rubedo).

Furthermore, as we have seen from the results of the long-term case study, this process can continue through a series of dream cycles, with each successive cycle incorporating a new fundamental shift in the consciousness of the dreamer. It was also observed that, compared to the number of worldly dreams at the outset of the process, and the worldly or material consciousness of their dreams, the dreamer in each successive cycle of dreams had their consciousness raised to a new 'baseline' level of dreaming in which the archetypal spiritual dimension became more and more present in the dreams, whilst the worldly impressions began to disappear. At the end of each cycle, the dreamer returned (Rubedo) to 'earth' but in a new way that incorporated something of the subtler dimensions of consciousness in their inner archetypal journey. Thus on the one hand dreams have the capacity to reflect the events of the dreamer's waking life and the way the dream is able (or unable) to relate to them. On the other hand, by working with dreams, psychological stress can also be relieved, resulting in a benefit that is realised in the person's waking life. However, when the dreamer is exposed to the subtle levels of self, the archetypal dimensions, the effect can be significant, production or destruction (if the person's ego structure is unstable). Indeed, exposure to the Sacred self or Pure self or to a transcendental experience can have a profound effect on the psyche, resulting in a spiritual awakening or at the very least, act as a reliever of stress.

The relation of dreaming to waking life and the effects of dreaming and dreams on waking life

The potentially beneficial effect of the sacred in dreams has been discussed as a reliever of stress (Phillips & Pargament, 2002). In addition, it has been shown that the resolving of psychological issues leads to the accessing of the levels of self in the transformation process. This aspect has been amply demonstrated through Jung's work on dreams and the individuation of the Self (Jung, 1968). The present study has also produced instances where dreams have been able to predict when the dreamer will achieve a foretold state of psycho-spiritual development (U. 28.4.01 and 7.2.02). The literature search has also linked cases where dreams have drawn the attention of the dreamer to body symptoms (Mallon, 2000; Wood, Bootzin, Quan & Klink, 1993) and have acted as aids in helping clients to adjust to previous psychological traumas (Hartmann, 1995), in solving problems (Dahlenburg, 1993) and in assisting psychological development (Darling, Hoffman, Moffat & Purcell, 1993).

The mechanism of distortion in dreams and the emphasis on distortion as a phenomenological aspect of dreams

The mechanism of distortion in dreams, such as in nightmares, bizarre images and bizarre scenarios are explained as the dream's ability to mirror the inner imbalances or distortions present in the dreamer's psyche. Such distortions could be physical imbalances (illness, indigestion) or psychological distortions such as irrational fears, anger and resentment or guilt at having betrayed someone we care about. Naturally, they can also relate directly to a dangerous or nightmarish life situation that the dreamer is caught up in. The retreat dream texts that followed the psycho-spiritual transformation process showed distortions when the retreatant or the dreamer was struggling with themselves in the Nigredo stage and in the early stages of the Creative self, when mental difficulties were being shown to the dreamer and in the negative phase of the Wise self where the distortion created by deep inner conflicts and tensions within the psyche were revealed to the dreamer. The dream texts also continued with evidence of distortions even in the stage of Citrinitas, perhaps showing the spiritual distortions or the distorted spiritual beliefs of the dreamer. Distortions

also appeared in Rubedo, showing the retreatant's reluctance and apprehension about their return to the world.

To sum up, distortions can be explained as a type of false projection onto and perception of life that the dreamer carries in their attitudes, this being reflected back to the dreamer in the dream.

The problem of forgetting dreams and the power of remembering them

This study has shown that the ability to recall dreams is present during a spiritual retreat. None of the subjects had difficulty in recalling dreams, although there were occasions in the process when no dreams were remembered. By contrast, the subjects found that their ability to recall dreams once the retreat had ended diminished. In part this may be explained by the subjects' interest in their dreams during a transformation process, thereby making dream recall easier. Secondly, Halliday (1992) has shown the effect of encouragement on dream recall, viz. at the outset, although there was no overt expectation, the subjects were encouraged to write down their dreams. Finally, it has been shown that dream recall is related to a positive attitude towards dreams, a good imagination and what is termed 'thin boundaries' between the waking and dreaming consciousness (Hartmann, Elkin & Garg, 1991). This would explain why some people on or 'off-retreat' are regularly able to remember their dreams.

It was noticeable in this study that the number of dreams remembered increased soon after the start of the retreat. Given the above mentioned dream studies, this suggested three things. Firstly, that the boundaries between waking and dreaming consciousness become thinner on retreat, and secondly that when there is a particular focus on the value of remembering dreams, dream recall becomes easier. Thirdly, that on retreat there is little or no external distraction or interesting experiences to hold onto, resulting in the retreatant's attention turning within to latch on to their inner world. However, this does not necessarily mean that the retreat culture influenced the types of dreams or the dreams of the levels of self - this was refuted by the lack of correlation between retreat experience and the colour count rankings. It does, however, mean that a culture that encourages the remembering of dreams, such as in psychotherapy or on retreat, is very helpful to dream recall.

The meaning of dreams and the uses of dream interpretation

The results of this study have restricted the role of dream interpretation to the psycho-spiritual transformation process. Several visual metaphors used in the process have been discussed in chapters five, six, seven and eight and catalogued in appendix IX. Their use, however, need not necessarily be so limited, since they convey impressions from an archetypal level of the psyche, which is always present, albeit unconsciously. Hence the usefulness of these metaphors can be extended to include all remembered archetypal dreams, whenever they occur. They herald the emergence of new qualities into the consciousness of the dreamer, suggesting as Jung said (1968) that another aspect of the inner self is becoming known.

As to the greater challenge of interpreting dreams outside of the retreat setting, this dream theory relies on the evidence of the two long-term case studies of the psycho-spiritual transformation process, one in which the dreams tracked the progress of U. through several shifts in her consciousness, the other in which Jung's case study recorded two successive cycles of dreams. To go even further, to begin to use this dream theory in all cases where a psychological or psycho-spiritual transformation process is taking place, then we must first look to Wilber's notion of human (and spiritual) development, described in his 'spectrum of consciousness' (Wilber, 1977). Each stage of human development, from pre-personal to personal to existential to transpersonal to transcendental involves a distinct shift in consciousness (Wilber, 1977).

Firstly then, it would be reasonable to assume that the dreams that clients present could be interpreted using a dream theory relevant to the particular level of development the person is struggling with, i.e. sexual conflicts, inhibitions, fear and desires could be interpreted largely through Freud's dream theory. Similarly, splitting theory (Klein, 1984), separation and attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973), all of which lie within the pre-personal stage of human development, would serve as valuable theoretical resources for the interpretation of pre-personal issues in a client's dreams. The level of self-actualisation, assuming a healthy ego, leads to the incorporation of the mind-body link (Wilber's 'centaur', 1979b). This falls within the humanistic

range of theories of Adler (1936), Rogers (1986), Perls (1969.). Dream interpretation can be greatly assisted by making use of the wisdom and experience that lies behind these psychotherapeutic approaches. Similarly, Laing (1982), May (1977), Yalom (1975), Husserl (1931) have articulated the psychological/spiritual dilemmas that are faced at this stage as we begin to move beyond our fragile human 'self-development'. Jung (1965), Assagioli (1971), Maslow (1968), pioneers of the transpersonal approach, all contributed to the understanding and interpretation of this, the next level of development in Wilber's spectrum. Finally, we are challenged to begin to consciously embrace the notion of and belief in the transcendental dimensions of Wilber's spectrum. The latter case is best interpreted by the psycho-spiritual model presented in the analysis.

Secondly, the model of transformation presented in this study is applicable only when a shift in human consciousness or a change in our human development is taking place, i.e. when the psyche is stable, then the defences or boundaries of the self prevent the underlying archetypes from emerging into consciousness. During such shifts the worldly ego or mental defences that 'veil' our conscious perception crumble, leaving the subject exposed to the underlying archetypal dimensions, which then become present in our dreams. In the first transition from the pre-personal to the personal stage of human development, the archetypes appear through the instincts, as vast, unending cravings and frighteningly powerful destructive rages. In our transformation model, this is the Nigredo stage. For example, if this took place in the context of a therapeutic process, then the shift from the pre-personal to the personal stage would be described mainly by the Nigredo stage of the transformation model presented in this study. However, even though the Nigredo stage would be present for most of the transformation process, the moment of the formation of the new personal self would be indicated by the transition from the Nigredo to the Albedo stage. At this point the psyche would stabilise, and form new boundaries/defences. Similarly, the archetypes that appear in the shift from the personal ego to the stage of the Centaur (in Wilber's spectrum), where the split between mind and body consciousness is being overcome, i.e. the archetypes of the Self (Jung, 1968) that relate to the need for creative self-expression, for achievement, for self-recognition and for self-love would involve the Nigredo, Albedo and Rubedo stages of the alchemical model. However, the Albedo stage, with the levels of the Creative, Loving

and Wise self, would be emphasised. That is to say, the themes inherent in these levels would feature in the Albedo stage of the process. The levels of the Sacred and Pure self are not likely to be experienced as they carry very little of the instinctual forces in them whereas the Centaur distinctly includes animal as well as human in it. Once the Centaur stage of human development is achieved, the transformation process would enter the Rubedo stage, and a new set of boundaries stabilising the personality and psyche, would be established. The transition from the Centaur to the transpersonal, witnessed in so many of the dream texts in this study, would see the emergence of spiritual archetypes, appearing more clearly behind the psychological issues that the retreatant encounters, from level to level of subtle self, in the Albedo stage. For the transpersonal, the levels of the Sacred and Pure self would be much more prominent, being in themselves increasingly less personal. The Nigredo would now be less emphasised in this transformation process, which may also show the stages of Citrinitas, in a somewhat veiled way. The Rubedo stage would once again see the establishment of new boundaries for the stabilising of the self. Edinger (1991), in his description of dreams encountered via the various alchemical operations in a transformation process, gives examples of dreams illustrating the pre-personal, personal and transpersonal stages of development.

In the transition from the transpersonal to the transcendental, the Citrinitas stage is emphasised, where the psychological issues and the sense of a personal self disappear. Nigredo is scarcely evident, Albedo is present, and Rubedo again sees a return to the establishment of a new sense of self that can incorporate this 'transcendental experience' in everyday life. Thus, every shift in human consciousness or in human development will involve a cyclic transformation process, showing one or more of the stages of the alchemical process. However, the more evolved the stage of human development, the clearer the subtle, archetypal levels of self become in the dreamer.

It is explained in this model that the levels of self do not represent a developmental structure. They instead represent an archetypal structure of levels of consciousness. However, each time someone experiences a 'developmental shift/transition', e.g. pre-personal to personal or personal to transpersonal, the established 'self structure' or 'ego state' breaks down to reveal or give the person access to their inner structure of the levels of consciousness.

To sum up, a new theory of dreams can now be articulated which incorporates the appropriate psychotherapeutic theories or dream theory along with the corresponding stage of conscious development, so clearly described by Wilber (1999). This theory includes a psycho-spiritual model of transformation, describing the stages and the levels of self which can be accessed in the transformation process.

9.12 On the consideration of competing research perspectives and competing theoretical views when considering the results and their interpretation in this study

What follows is a comparison of the results and their interpretation with other competing dream theories and research perspectives.

Firstly, when considering the classical psychoanalytical perspective in studying the dream texts, it is clear that the level of the Instinctual self, the Nigredo stage, can be reinterpreted as the underlying driving force behind the normally predominant conscious attitudes of the retreatants. Freud would agree with this. Subsequently, however, in the Albedo stage, this notion becomes an increasingly remote prospect for successful interpretation as the influence of the instinctual nature disappears, and, further, that it is not replaced by a super-ego attitude, since in the Citrinitas stage, the sense of self disintegrates leading in some cases to a sense of no self, no ego. Clearly then the results go beyond the capacity of psychoanalysis to explain the apparent progression in the levels of subtle self. Even in the theme of the pursuit of the Beloved figure in the texts (which Freud might have seen as libido being caught up in the mother/father complex), so strongly aspected in U.'s dreams, the *coniunctio* experiences transcend physical desire and often do not result in any physical contact or physical union with the Beloved figure, although initially this was true in the first two cycles of U.'s dreams. By the third cycle, this phenomenon had changed to become literally that of the mystic's feelings of longing for and the experience of union with the Beloved.

Secondly, the clinical perspective focuses on the idea that either 'dreams are simply an expression of the biology and physiology of the brain' (Hobson, 1988) or 'dreams

are simply a means of reflecting our everyday life and in reliving it we relieve ourselves of the stress involved' (Hartmann, 1991; Cortright, 1991; Lavie & Kaminer, 1991). However, the biological/physiological explanation does not seem to fit in with the sense of order and structure within the dreams series of each retreatant, let alone the structure of the story within any of the dreams. Nor do the theories that suggest that dreams are a measure of discharging our inner psychic tension concerning the anxieties of our everyday personal lives. Gillespie (2002) attempts to clarify the issue by reducing the classification of dreams to two types. He defines the clear differences between representational and presentational symbolism in the dreams, pointing out that representational dreams reflect our everyday life and memories, whereas presentational dreams being archetypal in their nature, do not. Many of the retreat dreams in this study were archetypal.

A third perspective on dreams is considered by Phillips & Pargament (2002, p.146):

"Some dream theories have suggested dreams are attempts at coping with life stressors".

However, the unfolding narratives in the dream data counter this idea since every retreatant had to struggle with one or more stressful issues (in their dreams and consciously on the retreat) and resolve them before they could access the next subtle level of self, i.e. the resolving of the stressor led to a deeper inner opening of their psyche and to a more subtle experience of themselves. Furthermore, the stressors changed from worldly tensions such as the greed for money, or for status during the Nigredo stage (the Instinctual self), to the tension of the gender struggle in themselves in balancing the masculine and feminine in the psyche (struggled with in the Creative self), to their struggle with the inner tensions created by distorted qualities or parts of themselves at a deeper level in the Wise self, to the stress created by their self-image in the Sacred self leading finally to the relief of stress in the Pure self where they experienced an impersonal detachment and freedom from any such self concept. The conclusion is that for a while in the transformation process (Nigredo) the struggle (and stress) is to do with life stressors, things outside ourselves, objective stressors, which trigger our own instinctual levels. However, at a certain point, the point of turning within (Albedo), the stressors arise from within and are therefore subjective. In the

relief of such inner stresses the retreatant experiences a sense of simplicity of Being, which in this study is called the Pure self. It has no object to focus on, no personal thoughts to ponder on. Continuance of this stage leads to the experience of transcendence, no self, in which suddenly a much greater sense of Being is experienced (Citrinitas).

The next competing perspective to consider is the view that the retreat dreams were influenced by the dreamer's mental constructs. Normally constructs refer to mental attitudes/beliefs, ideas that our minds create, using language and imagery to communicate these constructs. Similarly, our environment and culture can be seen to influence such ideas and beliefs.

However, in this retreat dream study the question is whether each dream represented a spiritual 'construct' or not, i.e. that the retreatants, in having spent so much time working with their spiritual practices each day, developed a mental attitude (construct) that influenced their dreams. This may be possible in some circumstances or contexts and yet it does not explain why the dreams, which occurred in the unconscious state (and did not reflect the content of the day's spiritual practices), reflecting instead a specific order (of development) within the conflicts and struggles in their dreams and a specific order in the spiritual development of the themes, i.e. the spiritual development of the dream themes paralleled the accessing of increasing spiritual depth in the retreatant's psyche. This suggests that the spiritual practices acted instead as a catalyst in the retreatant's spiritual unfoldment, releasing the grip of their minds on a particular sense of self, or reality, and as a result revealing an underlying structure of consciousness. Furthermore, there were cases where these dream experiences involved lucidity and that in the case of S.F. and S.L. the conscious experiences eventually became transcendental. In the case of U., and of S.F., the lucid dreaming and waking experiences continued – beyond a sense of self. Once one goes beyond a sense of self one goes beyond the realm of mental constructs and even of archetypes. At this point, the 'construct' view of dreams completely collapses. By definition, a mental construct cannot be involved in a transcendent experience – certainly not a construct that relates to the self, i.e. the part of this alchemical model that includes the transcendental dream experiences, the Citrinitas stage, cannot be counted as a mental construct and must therefore be accepted simply

as a transcendental spiritual experience. However, as the Tibetan Buddhist texts point out, clarity of dreams precedes clear light dreams, i.e. in the Albedo stage, the dreams have relatively transpersonal images, or the transparency of our personal self enables us to perceive the archetypes with the dream images. But once we reach the stage of clear light dreams, as did S.F. and U. (which are not dreams in the conventional sense, since they have no images), only light appears, i.e. the archetypal forms disappear and that which lies behind the archetype (light) appears. In the case of U., cycle 3, Clear Light dreams began to appear even in the Albedo stage and Clear Light experiences (an advanced stage of Clear Light dreams) began to appear in the Citrinitas/Rubedo stage. In cycle 2, U. had only one Clear Light dream. This showed the increasing presence of the transcendental in her dreams. Therefore it seems reasonable to propose that the “steps in consciousness” represented by the subtle levels of self, are not merely mental constructs and are indeed a reflection of an underlying, inner, subtle structure of consciousness within the human psyche. However, at a certain point, the point of transcendental consciousness, we ‘step off’ the ladder, beyond structure.

As another alternative perspective, Kugler (1993) promotes a post-modern version of the Jungian perspective that looks at the use of language and personal inner imagery (called Imagos). Because these are used as intermediaries, we can never truly apprehend or express the noumenal, or the metaphysical realms. “It is not possible to clearly see through their ghostly images (imagos) to a reality that is metaphysical”, i.e. it is not possible to truly see or know the actual archetypes that exist through our images of them or through the words (and hence constructs) of people who have experienced them. The suggestion here is that the retreatant can never truly know the archetype behind each subtle level of self that is being described in this study because of their own images and because of their own inner constructs. The dream texts in part, as represented by the Nigredo stage and the first subtle self in the Albedo stage, the Instinctual and the Creative selves, clearly showed the point that Kugler is making. However, his explanation begins to become less plausible with each successive level of subtle self until in some cases when the Citrinitas stage was reached, and the sense of self became very shaky or even absent, the transcendent state appeared, clearly beyond the inner images or imagos. For example, the dream experience in cycle three of U.’s dreams was discussed above in which the image

disappeared altogether. U. recorded a light which was accompanied by the consciousness of no self, no time, no space. S.F. in her retreat, recorded a similar experience. Clearly then, in the transcendental state, imagos simply disappear enabling a more direct experience of the 'archetype' to occur. Secondly, each set of retreat dreams showed the presence of these subtle levels of self and each retreatant accessed these subtle levels in their own personal way. Some experienced these archetypes more clearly than others and, as a result, recorded a correspondingly more profound psycho-spiritual transformation. In the cases of those retreatants ranked in the second half of the colour frequency rankings, the images or imagos that carried the presence of these archetypes were more personalised and disguised (their imagos carried several qualities relating to the levels of self).

Some retreatants accessed several levels of self, some accessed only two levels of self (they carried only a few of the archetypal qualities in their imagos); all however recorded similar themes for the subtle levels of self – an unlikely result if each individual, given their own imagos, constructed their own reality. This is particularly so considering that each retreatant is at a different stage of spiritual development or has a different spiritual perspicacity compared to others, i.e. the dream images or 'imagos' that Kugler refers to do not always remain as far removed from the archetypes that they represent, particularly so since they carry the seeds or qualities of the archetypes in the images.

Instead, the deeper the retreatant goes into their retreats the closer the images (Imagos) resemble the archetype in the sense that these images become more impersonal and show the spiritual qualities of the spiritual archetypes, or the level of self, with increasing clarity.

Thus the argument about language and images as tools for constructing our sense of self, and hence creating a 'gap' between our sense of self and the true Self begins to fade as the retreatant strips away the layers of self, going deeper and deeper from the Creative self to the Pure self - until a point is reached, the Citrinitas stage, when the self disappears and the true Self, in which a state of non-dualistic oneness is experienced, beings to be realised. Several retreatants spoke of a sense of the eternal, indicating that in this life, we can realise this through a psycho-spiritual

transformation experience. The sense the reader of the dream texts gets is that as the retreatant progresses along the spiritual path, the clearer the images in their dreams become, whether the images are personal or whether they are impersonal, archetypal revelations, until, at a certain point, the retreatant comes to the actual experience of essence (Almaas, 1998). This is similar to Jung's description of the experience of the Self (1968). Perhaps Jung's Self, which has the connotations of an Absolute, fundamental consciousness cannot be truly known, but that does not mean to say that one cannot approach the Self 'in steps', a view also held by both the Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist traditions. In fact Jung hints at this in the classic *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (Edinger, 1995) but nevertheless refrains from giving it further consideration, this belonging to the realms of the metaphysical and the mystical. Thus the steps or levels of self seem to represent an underlying structure of consciousness in the psyche which can be transited during a psycho-spiritual transformation process through to a transcendent state of consciousness beyond self.

In considering the Rubedo stage of the retreat process, where the retreatant retraces their steps back down the inner ladder through successively grosser levels of self until the physical or Instinctual self is reached, the personal re-emerges, but in a way that indicates that some aspect of their essence or Self has been consciously incorporated, i.e. the old Imagos, which separated them from their true Self and which were experienced earlier during the Nigredo and early Albedo stages, do not return. In the ideal case of the psycho-spiritual transformation including the experience of mystical union, Ib'n Arabi, the great 12th century Sufi, has said: "In the beginning we awaken to the Divine in us, but in the end, God awakens in us, through us, as us" (Corbin, 1969). This implies that even in the rare cases of mystical union, unity consciousness, which are followed by a return to this world, the Rubedo stage, a descent through the subtle levels to the grosser levels of self, one realises that the so-called "underlying structure of consciousness" is not just a part of our inner psyche, it is a part of the Self, an expression of the spirit that is invested in us. When we return to the worldly state, the Self then unfolds itself again as a descending ladder of consciousness so that it may be remembered consciously in our everyday life.

The "*inability to transgress the text*" (Kugler, 1993, p.134) may well prevent us from enabling other readers to know our experience in a truly intimate way. Conversely,

our experience of these levels of self may not be able to be perfectly or even accurately communicated through words. However, there is enough of a consistency in the dream texts of this study to suggest that something significant and substantial in a subtle sense can be experienced beneath our conscious awareness, something that can be apprehended through the dream imagery during the process of a psycho-spiritual transformation.

In situating this research work within the transpersonal writings of Rowan (2005) and Wilber (1999), a comparison with Rowan's interpretation of Wilber's model in terms of the alchemical stages of transformation can now be made. In his text Rowan renames the fulcrums in terms of eleven phases, linking them to Wilber's fulcrum levels.

Rowan's text (2005) reviews Wilber's model of consciousness development, the 'fulcrum model' (Wilber, 1999), by identifying and linking personal experiences from his and other practitioners' clinical experiences to the fulcrum levels 1 to 9.

This is also backed up by extensive references to theoretical writings representing the existential, psychodynamic, cognitive and transpersonal schools of psychotherapy, each of which is related to one of Wilber's fulcrums. Whilst the current research thesis focuses largely on Wilber's fulcrum numbers 7, 8 and 9, with fulcrum 8, involving an awareness of archetypes as being within the subtle realm, it is really intended to describe what people experience between fulcrum shifts, or during a period of significant changes in the subject's consciousness development.

The current work suggests that during a psycho-spiritual transformation, the subject's ego defences collapse, or partially collapse, allowing something of the deeper, inner archetypal realms of consciousness to come through to consciousness, or at least in dreams. Since this transformation process is cyclic, and proceeds in stages, it occurs in the second alchemical stage of the process, Albedo, the subtle stage, in which the subtle realm of archetypes is experienced. This would apply to shifts from any one fulcrum to another, although the nature of the experience of this inner structure of archetypes will vary according to the level of conscious awareness of the subject at the time. For example, these archetypes will be experienced in the transitions

between the first three fulcrums, fulcrums 0 to 2, in terms of overwhelming fears, rages, sexual drives, jealousies, etc. Whereas in the transition between 3 and 4, and 4 and 5 they will be experienced more through mental ideas, mind scripts and fixed beliefs. In the transition between fulcrums 5 and 6, and 6 and 7, the experience of the archetypes will be again in terms of powerful emotions held in the body, so that now the mind has to allow them to emerge to complete the Centaur stage of development. It is only in the transition between fulcrums 7 and 8, and 8 and 9, that the archetypes described as subtle levels will be experienced as the ‘subtle levels of self’, listed in the templates in Chapter Five. It is at this point that this research work coincides with Rowan’s notion of the subtle realm as being the realm of the transpersonal. And yet the work also amplifies the notion by demonstrating that this subtle self can be experienced as a sequence of several increasingly subtle levels of self.

9.13 Contemporary views on dreaming and dreamless sleep that support the results of the thesis

Gillespie (2002) points out that the subject of dreamless sleep has been ignored, and quotes both Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist texts, which regard it as a step towards spiritual awakening. In looking at the results of this dream study, U. was the only case from the results of the analysis in which this dreamless state occurred whilst sleeping and upon waking she remained in the same state of consciousness.

S.F.1998’s dreams experienced this transcendental state whilst awake, but not whilst asleep.

Hunt (1989) distinguishes between two general types of dreaming, called representational symbolic and presentational symbolism. The former includes most dreams, being based mainly on personal memories which are very similar in content to our daily life. Presentational symbolism occurs in archetypal, lucid and nightmare dreams and typically includes experiences of mandalas, white light and geometric patterns. Presentational symbolism can be extended to an intense experience of transformation, such as during a spiritual retreat.

In reviewing the dream text material of this study it is fairly apparent that the retreatants began to experience presentational symbolism in their dreams from the

outset of their retreats. It was involved in all four alchemical stages of the process, beginning with the nightmares experienced in Nigredo, to the vivid unworldly images and mandala patterns in Albedo to the experiences, in a few cases, of white light in Citrinitas and Rubedo.

Gillespie (2002) also reviews the most recent dream research of La Berge & Rheingold (1990) and Foulkes (1985) who contend that dreams simulate waking perception and not waking experience. He also gives examples in which imagery in the dream simulates an inner experience in the dream itself, e.g. light in a dream is not a simulation of light, it is the subjective experience of brightness. Similarly, in lucid dreams, brightness (light) may appear without a simulating form or dream context.

These are examples taken from lucid dreaming experiences but they can equally apply to clearly remembered dreams, which occur with increasing frequency as a spiritual retreat progresses. Thus dream imagery experienced on retreat, from this point of view could not be considered as simulating everyday life nor could it be seen as simply connecting to personal memories and expressions and reliving them in a variety of ways in the dreams, i.e. it does not necessarily relate (only) to the dreamer's past experiences. On the contrary, the above arguments emphasise the genuineness of the dream experience as a visual record of an internal event taking place at that point of the psycho-spiritual transformation.

The views of Gillespie and Hunt and the dream texts of this study on dreams strongly suggest that the dreams of each retreatant be taken as the dream experiences of an inner journey and a set of events that occurred during the retreat, i.e. as a visual record of the process of the retreatant's psycho-spiritual transformation. Evidence for their views on dream imagery as simulating an inner psychic experience was found during the Nigredo and Albedo stages of the retreatants' dreams and their views on dreamless sleep were validated by some of the dream experiences during the Citrinitas and Rubedo phases.

Finally, the comments of Travis (1994), in his junction point model, seem to support the possibility of the existence of several levels of consciousness (or levels of self) through the experience of dreaming, waking and sleeping:

“While each level of mind is posited to function in every state of consciousness, the specific quality of that functioning would be determined by the quality of consciousness that it is activating.” (Travis, 1994, p.11.)

Similarly, Etevenon (2004) has suggested a model of dreaming that links the dream state with various levels of consciousness. He has based his model on Sri Aurobindo's eight planes of consciousness and compared it with the dreams study of Patricia Garfield (1992). Much of the work in this research study however concerns the first hand contact with people on retreat, their dreams and the levels of consciousness they access. It also includes some of the journal notes of the retreatants, as well as the researcher's views of the dreams as retreat guide (in approximately half of the cases).

Thus, the results of this thesis provide support for several contemporary views on dreaming and dreamless sleep. The research material offers several direct examples of dreamless sleep that support Gillespie's view. The results also provide not only further evidence of Hunt's presentational symbolism, but they also show that the psycho-spiritual transformation process provides a complete context for the manifestation and conscious unfoldment of archetypal material into the dreamer's psyche. Finally, the images found in the themes of each level of self provide ample evidence for La Berge & Rheingold's and Foulkes' notion that imagery in the dream simulates an inner experience in the dream itself. In summary, the transformational model and dream theory presented in this dream study combines these contemporary views into one theoretical stream in which the reality of the dream experiences can be seen as a direct expression of the dreamer's inner psychic life. Further, that at a critical point of the process of spiritual awakening, the aspirant's inner psychic life is experienced as being contiguous with their outer perceptions of the world. At this point, Travis' junction model of consciousness applies, whereby the aspirant experiences continuity of consciousness between waking, sleeping and dreaming.

9.14 The Value of the Old: agreements with established traditions as research material

Hartmann(1992) suggests an implicit criterion for validating observations is the checking of one's knowledge, findings and conclusions against those recorded by others through the ages - that is, to compare one's findings with a long-enduring tradition.

“Implicit in this criterion, is the idea that any long-standing tradition must have made contact with realities that were sufficiently reliable and valid to ensure the longevity of that tradition. Certain traditions have survived and survival is an indicator of intelligence and adaptation. Adaptation in turn is related to an adequate mirroring of the realities in which the tradition is embedded.” (Braud & Anderson, p.231).

The findings in this study showed a correlation with the documented knowledge of the levels of consciousness in the Sufi tradition and with the dream models of both the Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist tradition. These traditions have not only handed down an ancient knowledge, but they have re-lived, re-experienced and re-tested it again and again for over a thousand years. To this day, both traditions make use of this knowledge through the use of dream diagnosis when guiding their initiates in training.

What follows then is a comparison of the results of this study with two great spiritual traditions that have used dreams as a means of tracking the aspirant's psycho-spiritual transformation process.

9.15 A comparison of the results of this study with the Tibetan Dream Yoga texts and the Sufi literature on dreams and the levels of consciousness accessed during a psycho-spiritual transformation process

Of the various approaches to the study of dreams, the Eastern traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and Sufism are the only two that explicitly make use of dreams as a means of guiding the spiritual aspirant through a psycho-spiritual transformation process.

They are also the only two established spiritual traditions that have published books on this subject.

The role of Dream Yoga in the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual path

Tibetan Dream Yoga regards meaning in dreams as a first step only in the psycho-spiritual transformation process (Wangyal, 1998), that is to say, interpretation and meaning is not the purpose of dreams. The aim is to go beyond interpretation and to experience or ‘wake up’ to that which lies behind or beyond the dream.

The six realms of existence

Tibetan Dream Yoga texts list six possible realms of existence in which all ‘deluded’ human beings participate (Wangyal, 1998; Dalai Lama, 1997; Namkhai Norbu, 1992). Those who are free of delusion, that is to say, those who are enlightened and live in a state of non-dual awareness, are free to enter any realm of existence and not be affected by its nature. These six realms of existence, discussed in the literature search section, are listed below in Table 9.1. The six realms are related to the corresponding negative emotions associated with them and to the chakras or psychic energy centres located in the body.

Table 9.1 The six realms of existence¹

Realm	Negative emotion	Chakra
Hell realm	Hatred, anger	Base (of spine)
Hungry ghost (pretas)	Greed	Sacrum (sexual organs)
Animal	Ignorance	Navel/solar plexus
Human	Jealousy	Heart
Demi-god (asuras)	Envy, pride	Throat
God (devas)	Pleasurable distractions	Crown

¹ Adapted from Wangyal, 1998, p.37

Yoga of the Dream State

The six realms of existence in Tibetan Buddhism are, according to the texts, initially experienced through the negative emotions by the aspirant. Thus in the beginning of their training their dreams (called ordinary dreams at this stage,) will show that they are still deluded and trapped by one or more of the six negative emotions that pertain to these realms. Therefore, one's dreams, at the outset of a spiritual transformation process, are expected to be ordinary (dreams), with each dream usually pertaining to one of the six realms via its corresponding negative emotion.

However, as one progresses, and becomes more conscious in the dream state, as in lucid dreaming, the practitioner, by practising awareness (whilst dreaming) of the illusory nature of the dream state, gradually develops greater insight. Such insights are followed by 'dreams of clarity' or 'clear dreams' in which the negative emotions are gradually overcome, enabling the dreamer to become free of the deluding nature of his or her negative emotions. At this point the ordinary dreams begin to disappear. The dreams are also less complex, less worldly and the themes emerging in the dreams stand out more clearly. The texts explain that this is due to a change in the dreamer's consciousness which has caused the change in the dream clarity. In visual terms, this clearer consciousness is a reflection of the influence of the 'clear light' in a purely impersonal, non-dualistic state of awareness, which all human beings can have access to. When this 'clear light' starts to become present in the dreamer's consciousness, the dreams become clearer and more impersonal.

Finally, when the practitioner of the Yoga of the Dream State has achieved mastery over their dreams, they awaken in the dream state to go beyond the dream images and to experience a state of consciousness called 'clear light' only, i.e. in this state they experience nothing but 'clear light' and a state of oneness with it. Now there is no separate sense of self.

It is expected that the practitioner will progress through the six realms, starting with the Hell realm and then progressing to the sixth realm, the realm of the devas. There is a simultaneous progression through the chakras from base to crown, that corresponds to each of the six realms.

Comparing the results of the analysis with the Tibetan Dream Yoga texts

The progress through and freedom from the six Buddhist inner psychic realms of existence depends upon the overcoming of six principal negative human emotions. That is, these emotions could also be seen as six negative blocks, each of which relates to a particular realm of existence. Thus by overcoming hatred and anger, one is freed up from the tyranny of the 'Hell' realm and given the freedom to access or transcend this realm. Similarly, having overcome greed, one is free to move on to other realms, and so on. However, no positive attributes of such realms are described, suggesting that the basic object is, firstly, the overcoming of such negative traits, and secondly the overcoming of any attachment to any of the six realms in their positive or negative archetypal aspects, in order to reach a non-dualistic state of consciousness. Thus it would seem that the Tibetan Buddhist teaching is not particularly interested in describing or experiencing anything other than the personal limitations that block our experiencing of unity consciousness.

In looking at the results of the analysis summarised in the templates of the levels of self, it is clear that the six realms, which are experienced by human beings respectively as the negative emotions of anger, greed, ignorance, jealousy, pride and pleasurable distraction, are evident mainly in the level of the Instinctual self, which is experienced during the Nigredo phase of the retreat.

Thereafter, once the Albedo stage of the retreat begins, the impact of these negative emotions diminishes rapidly. In the Creative self, for example, anger, greed and jealousy seem to disappear from the dream texts, whilst the remaining three are less obvious, and therefore not so easily identifiable. In the Loving self, the six negative emotions disappear almost completely. However, in the negative phase of the Wise self, some of these negative emotions reappear impersonally in the themes as conflicting sides in the dreams, contrasting with the personalised dream experiences of the negative emotions during the Nigredo phase. A possible explanation for this might be that the clarity of the consciousness brings the conflicting sides of the psyche to the fore, but in a more impersonal, objective way. The dreamer watches this conflict going on until it ceases, resulting in both sides being successfully

integrated together. At this point the positive phase of the Wise self begins and the six negative emotions basically disappear again. In the Sacred self they are hardly noticeable and in the Pure self they disappear completely. Throughout this process, the dreams become clearer and clearer, so that by the end of the Albedo stage the nature of the dreams is totally different (peaceful, sacred, light) to those at the start of the Nigredo phase which are typically turbulent, violent and dark.

Although most of the dreams recorded in the Citrinitas phase showed fragmentation of the self or impersonal spiritual themes, there were instances of 'clear light' dreams in two participants' dream texts (S.F. and U.).

The above comparison was based on the Tibetan Buddhist concept of the dualistic consciousness and the six realms of existence. In comparing the results with a second concept, that of the three kinds of dreams (discussed below), a much clearer understanding of the retreat dreams emerges.

Whilst negative emotions and descriptions of the six realms do not have a one to one correspondence with the archetypal levels of self, accessed during the transformation process in this study (partly because no positive emotions are listed in these descriptions), the overcoming of such emotions by the participants in this study resulted in access to the subtle levels of self. Thus the principle of certain psychological issues being linked to a particular level of self, presented in this study, is similar to the Tibetan Buddhist principle of linking specific negative emotions with a particular chakra. As each chakra opens, or as the consciousness opens to the energies of each chakra, so the aspirant ascends in terms of the subtleness of this consciousness.

The three kinds of dreams

Tibetan Dream Yoga also recognises three kinds of dreams in the psycho-spiritual transformation process: ordinary dreaming, dreams of clarity and clear light dreams. These categories were described in the Literature Review. In comparing the types of dream with the results of the analysis it would seem that ordinary dreams were present in the Instinctual self, whereas a change in the nature of the dreams to dreams of

clarity began to occur as the retreatant accessed the Creative self, and becoming increasingly clear as they accessed the Pure self. This occurs during the Albedo stage, in which dreams are becoming clearer and less personal. During Albedo, several successive underlying layers of consciousness emerge in the dreams drawing the dreamer's attention to personal issues and themes that pertain to each successive level of self that is being transited.

These themes are listed in the templates of the levels of self in the analysis section. Together these levels constitute an underlying structure that is normally hidden from the dreamer's consciousness. This is particularly evident in the dreams of S.F. and S.L., when the so-called 'ordinary dreams' give way fairly quickly to become 'dreams of clarity' within the first couple of days of their retreats, i.e. there was a quick transition from the Nigredo to the Albedo stage of the process. It would seem therefore that the transition from the Nigredo phase to the Albedo stage results in, or is comparable to, a change from ordinary dreams to clear dreams.

The initial signs of the third kind of dream, defined in this study in section 7.1.3 as clear light dreams, was in evidence in S.F., day 8 of her retreat. She began the night of day 8, with a dream. This was during the Citrinitas phase. However, upon waking she experienced a transcendental state of consciousness. At a certain point a white light hovered above her, which then descended and flowed through her whole body until she lost her bodily sense and experienced nothing but light. The clear light dream in turn gave way to a clear light experience as defined in section 7.1.3. In the case of S.L., she came close to the experience of clear light upon waking from her dreams. However, the light she saw was golden and was separate from her sense of self. Consequently this was classed as a clear light dream rather than a clear light experience as the most important criterion for such an experience is that of non-dual awareness, i.e. the light and the aspirant's experience of the light becomes one being.

The Tibetan Buddhist definition of clear light dreams therefore indicates a state of consciousness free from dream thought and image. However, there is also a clear light dream in which the dreamer remains in the nature of mind (Wangyal, 1998). That is to say, the dreamer manages to achieve a dream state in which they can

function cognitively in the dream, but they also remain in non-dual awareness. This was not achieved by any of the subjects chosen for the present study.

In the case of U., who recorded three cycles of dreams over two years, outside of the retreat setting, her experience of clear light dreams began to approach the Tibetan Buddhist's definition. Clear light dreams began to appear in cycle 3 (see Table 7.5, cycle 3 Analysis of U.'s dreams).

The example of U. differs from S.F. in that in two dreams, 28.4.01 and 26.7.03, she experienced clear light in a non-dual awareness state in the dreams and, upon waking, this non-dual state continued. (Although S.F. did record a transcendental experience which involved non-dual awareness upon waking from her dream, she did not experience this non-dual awareness in the dream state.) The example of U. is a most unusual case which was presented and discussed recently at an international dream conference (Hamilton, 2004). However, U. was not able to function cognitively in this state.

In conclusion, it seems that the Tibetan Buddhist model of dreams is able to provide an explanation for the change in the type of dreams experienced in this study, from the ordinary dreams to dreams of clarity to clear light dreams. However, the six realms of existence and the dreams that corresponded to them were experienced as ordinary dreams mainly in the Instinctual self, which then tapered off in the Albedo stage between the Creative self and the Pure self.

9.16 Comparing the results of the analysis with Sufi literature on the role of dreams in a psycho-spiritual transformation process

True dreams in the Sufi tradition

From the Sufi perspective, dreams allow us to experience the intermediate realm, that which lies between the realms of spirit and this world. In this way they act as a bridge between the world of spirit and the material world. However, dreams that require interpretation are not considered to be true dreams, whereas divinely-sent dreams, one of the traces of prophecy, are called true dreams. For the Sufis, true dreams are

experienced when the individual's spirit reaches past the intermediate realms and 'wakes' in the transcendental world of the unseen (von Schlegell, 1997).

Comparing the analysis to Ib'n Arabi's model of the physical world, the imaginal realm and the realm of spirit

Ib'n Arabi's model of the three realms (Harris, 1981), the physical world, intermediate realm and the realm of spirit can be compared with the results of this dream analysis. To begin with, instinctual dreams recorded on and off retreat during the alchemical stage of Nigredo, deal with the level of the Instinctual self and are comparable to the Sufi idea that false dreams are prompted by human sensory urges (von Grunebaum, 1966). The problem we encounter now is that Ib'n Arabi defined only two categories of imagination and consequently two basic categories of dreams (von Schlegell, 1997). We have dealt with the first category, the physical world, through the dreams recorded in the Nigredo phase, but then we have to skip an 'intermediate' category of dreams in order to reach Ib'n Arabi's category of divinely-sent dreams or 'true dreams'. It is suggested here therefore that the alchemical stage of Albedo, during which an ascent is made between the sensory world or the Instinctual self and the impersonal realm of spirit, covering the steps of the Creative, Loving, Wise, Sacred and Pure selves, could be considered as this missing intermediate category of dreams. This would leave the alchemical stage of Citrinitas as the category of Divinely-sent dreams, which seems to agree with the dream experiences of one retreatant, S.F., and those of U. in her third cycle of dreams. In these instances, the dreams and the corresponding waking experiences were completely impersonal and seemed to correspond closely to the Tibetan Buddhist definition of 'clear light' dreams, in which a state of non-dual awareness is achieved. The alchemical stage of Rubedo would then correspond to a return to the world view (and ordinary dreams) via the intermediate realm. Again, the evidence from the retreatants' dreams and those of U. seem to confirm this idea.

Comparing the analysis to Ib'n Arabi's model of the six realms of consciousness in the imaginal world

Ib'n Arabi describes six realms of consciousness on the spiritual journey to union with God in terms of a series of several steps, beginning with the signs of revelation in the 1st realm, each of which shows the presence of the Divine behind an archetypal form that appears in a vision or a dream to the aspirant. A description of the presence of the Divine through different archetypal forms in each realm is then discussed right up to the sixth realm. He goes even further to describe in detail the steps leading to a state of unity consciousness, but the latter is realised in the seventh realm as a transcendental experience beyond the consideration of this study.

The first few steps in the journey begin with archetypal visions of this world, the first realm of consciousness, concerning experiences of the spirits of each of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdom, followed by an encounter with the life forces that are in or close to this physical world. Many of these visions are frightening. However, these revelatory steps are not consciously accessible by people unless and until they begin to experience a particular state of profound spiritual awakening to a spiritual state, called *Malakut* by the Sufis. As such these experiences represent Divine revelations of that which transpires behind the appearance of this physical realm. Thus, whilst most people would see the physical world in physical terms, the mystic sees the presence of the Divine, in terms of various kinds of lights, colour and images normally unseen to the unawakened eye, in the physical world. Similarly, the mystic sees or experiences each of the six realms according to their spiritual perspicacity. However, from the point of view of spiritual practice, the beginner in this process, for example the retreatants in this study, is more likely to experience these subtle realms in a rather mundane and superficial way. Typically, the realms may be first experienced consciously as a confusing blur of unrelated images, some dark, some light. As the aspirant progresses, these realms gradually reveal themselves, according to the aspirant's ability to let go of their personal consciousness and to experience the presence of the transcendental behind each level or realm. Thus a step forward in this process of awakening would be to experience these realms in the dream state, i.e. somewhat unconsciously. Later the retreatant could expect more conscious experiences of visions and sounds in the waking state that corresponded to the

topography of each of the six realms. Finally, once the aspirant achieves the state of transcendental consciousness (Merrell-Wolf, 1973) they would begin to experience the more detailed descriptions of each level as described by Ib'n Arabi. Indeed, the dream data from cycle 3 of U. and of the retreatant S.F. indicate the beginnings of such revelatory experiences. In the case of U., when she experienced a shift in Cycle 3 of her dreams, the shift seemed at first to echo something of what Ib'n Arabi describes as *Malakut*. By the time U. recorded her experience of clear light at the end of Cycle 3, it became clear that she had indeed entered another sphere in which the experience of light corresponded closely to Ib'n Arabi's description of light in *Malakut*. What follows is a comparison of the results of this dream study with Ib'n Arabi's realms.

The first realm: Ib'n Arabi describes the visions of the first realm as a review of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, with each species being shown to the aspirant in terms of images of their essential qualities. For example, *“every sort of creature will acquaint you with its proclamation of majesty and praise. The animals will greet you and acquaint you with their harmful and beneficial qualities.”* (p.39.)

“Then after this, He reveals to you the infusion of the world of life-forces into lives and what influence this has in every being according to its predisposition.” (p.39.)

“And if you do not stop with this he reveals to you the “surface signs”². You will be admonished by terrors and many sorts of states will befall you. You will see clearly the apparatus of transformation: how the dense becomes subtle and the subtle dense ... Do not be afraid, and persevere in the Zikr.” (p.40.)

The above descriptions refer to the essences of or the archetypal presence of the Divine in the physical world, i.e. in the mineral, vegetable and animal forms, and to the presence of life forces in everything, organic and inorganic. By comparison, the aspirant experiences 'terrors and fears' at this point. The dream study showed the strong presence of the instinctual forces, such as greed, fear, rage, sex and hunger in

² “ ‘Surface signs’ ” (signs of state) means the elevation from state to state that begins to appear to the retreatant's inner sensitivity. To us, it means the essential lights - the transcendental glory seen from

the first alchemical stage of Nigredo, the Instinctual self. Whilst these dream experiences are unconscious, they are mirrored by the retreatant's conscious experience at this stage of heaviness, limitation, darkness, anger, fear, hunger and sexual desires. The withdrawal from the distractions of the outside world into a small retreat room allows the retreatant to experience and become conscious of their basic instinctual drives (Freud, 1923). This is apparent from the dreams and journal entries, in Appendices V, VI and VIII.

Second realm: In the second realm, Ib'n Arabi describes an ascent as though a bridge was being crossed between the physical world, the first realm and the subtle realms, beginning with the second realm of consciousness. This is followed by revelations as to the 'degrees of speculative sciences, sound integral ideas', and 'the form of perplexing questions which confirm understanding'. This can be compared with the level of the Creative self, which begins in the Albedo stage of the process, when creative ideas, inspirations, and a re-ordering of one's thought processes takes place. Thought processes that were based on personal life experiences (particularly painful and destructive ones) are transformed.

Third realm: In the third realm Ib'n Arabi refers to "*the world of formation and adornment and beauty, what is proper for the intellect to dwell upon from among the holy forms, the vital breathings from beauty of form and harmony, and the overflow of languor and tenderness and mercy in all things characterised by them. And from this comes the sustenance of poets, while from the one before comes the sustenance of preachers.*" (p.43.)

Comparisons with the dream data suggest that the 'Loving self' corresponds to this realm via the essential qualities of harmony and beauty of form, and that which is loving, innocent and natural.

Fourth realm: According to Ib'n Arabi the fourth realm begins with "*conflict, rage, hatred and distortions of truth. It later gives way to the more positive revelation of*

the perspective of affirmation - and the lights of the Divine Names which appear at the contemplation of their effects. All this becomes visible to the eye unrestricted by greed." (Harris, 1981).

Truth, true schools, sound opinions and revealed tradition” (p.44.), suggesting a resolution of the conflicts, hatred, discomfort and distortion of truth.

“He reveals to you the world of fear and rage and zeal for truth and falsehood, the foundation of apparent difference in the world, the variation of form, discord and hatred. And if you do not stop with this He reveals to you the world of jealousy and the unveiling of the truth before the more perfect of His faces; sound opinions, true schools and revealed traditions ... ” (p.44.)

Comparison with the dream data suggests a similarity with the negative phase of the Wise self followed by the positive phase of the Wise self. The negative phase focuses on conflict and division, and includes the themes of hatred, bigotry, zealousness, falsehoods and discord, whereas the positive phase reveals resolving of conflicts, balancing, openness and a lack of distortion of any quality.

This seems to be in accord with the themes contained in the negative and then the positive phases of the level of the Wise self.

Fifth realm: *“He reveals to you the world of dignity and serenity and firmness; the ruse, the enigmas and the secrets (of nature) ... the world of bewilderment and helplessness and inability and the treasures of works, and this is the highest heaven.” “He reveals to you the Garden; the degrees of their ascending steps, their blending into one another ...” (p.44.)*

This is comparable to the level of the Sacred self in which the qualities of sacredness, majesty, secrets, treasures and gardens appear in the imagery, as well as peacefulness, splendour, religious figures and holy temples/places.

Sixth realm: *“He reveals one of the sanctuaries where spirits are absorbed in the Divine Vision. In it they are drunken and bewildered. The power of ecstasy has conquered them, and their state beckons you.” (p.47.)*

This description does not tally with the template of the Pure self which emphasises innocence, light, purity, detachment.

In conclusion, there are striking similarities between the dream images and themes for each level of self contained in the dream data and the descriptions of at least five of the six realms given by Ib'n Arabi. Indeed his text roughly traces the ascent outlined in the analysis of this research study, through the levels of self right through to the Sacred self. His description of the sixth realm is the only exception, as it does not correspond with the template for the Pure self in this study. Similarly, the Citrinitas stage corresponds to Ib'n Arabi's description of Divine Vision and Absolute Imagination, experienced when one transcends the six realms. This corresponded to the dream texts in which the experience of clear light were recorded. It also corresponds to the Tibetan Buddhist notion of the non-dualistic experience of clear light. To sum up, this comparison has shown the transformation process to have very similar features between Tibetan Buddhism, Sufism and the results of this dream study.

9.17 Points in common between Tibetan Dream Yoga and Sufi texts on dreams and the levels of consciousness

The concept of subtle energy centres in the body, which, when opened, enable the aspirant to access the more subtle levels of consciousness

Table 9.1 presented the relationship between the chakras, the realms of existence and their corresponding negative emotions in the Tibetan Dream Yoga texts. This tabulation can now be usefully compared with the Sufi notion of the six levels of consciousness (Harris, 1981), which Ib'n Arabi also relates to the lataif - a Sufi term to denote 'subtle energy centres'. Whilst the exact definition of chakras and lataif differ, essentially they describe much the same phenomena. Each refers to the energy centres as having a more subtle, non-physical energy. Each assigns the same colours that mystics see when these psychic energy centres are opened. Each locates these psychic centres at the same physical points in the body, and each sees the process of spiritual awakening as proceeding from the base up to the crown centre. In establishing this link between the two inner psychic cosmologies via the subtle energy system in the body, it then becomes easier to understand how each sees these six realms and how they in fact have something in common with each other. In Tibetan

Dream Yoga, the six negative emotions draw us into the six realms of existence; conversely by overcoming these emotions we begin to progress through and eventually transcend them. In the Sufi tradition, however, the six levels of consciousness are earmarked by the opening up of qualities as each plane of consciousness is fully accessed.

Now upon examining the dream texts of this study we find evidence of both the subtle energy centres in the body and their relationship to the subtle sense of self. Firstly, we find that psychological issues crop up with the transiting of each subtle level of self (plane of consciousness). These psychological issues are accompanied by the experience of difficult or negative emotions. Secondly, what is noticeable is that before each new level of consciousness or new level of self can be accessed, the retreatants experienced troubling thoughts, images and emotions as though they were encountering a psychic barrier that had a particular mood or emotion associated with it. Later, having overcome the psychological issues to do with this level, the psychic barrier lifted enabling them to experience the purity, beauty and wonder of the qualities inherent in that particular level of self. These qualities are listed in the templates for each level of self. What is more, they found that this often corresponded to the opening up of energy around the physical location of a chakra. Unfortunately, some of the dream texts made no reference to the chakras, whilst others did, and so no systematic analysis correlating the levels of self accessed with the chakras could be made. However, it is clear from the journals and dream texts that some of the retreatants, and particularly in the case of U., experienced a gradual awakening in and sensing of the chakras in an orderly fashion, i.e. proceeding vertically upwards from the base to the crown. It would seem, therefore, that there is some evidence from the participant's personal experience of subtle energy centres opening up alongside the changes in their dreams, suggesting that there is an underlying structure of consciousness, sensed and accessed through the chakras in the body, which, as the chakras open, gives us access to the more subtle levels of self or consciousness. This idea is common to both the Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist traditions.

Examples from three retreatants, in Dream Data Sheets 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4, illustrate how the bodily symptoms and sensations of hot, cold, sound, light and energy are

associated with the opening up of a new level of subtle self and with a particular chakra or chakras.

Dream Data Sheet 9.2: Extracts showing body symptoms related to chakras: S.L.

The retreatant's personal notes are shown below. The researcher's comments are underlined.

Day 4 *Dreamt about fire during night. "When I wake up in the night after the dream there is a strong smell of fire." [base chakra] "When I wake up in the morning there is a strange burning sensation in my left eye." [third eye chakra] [indicated as at level of Wise self]*

Day 9 *Dream. "I wake up to a buzzing sound, which doesn't come from any of the inhabitants sharing my tent!" [buzzing sound is associated with the opening of the third eye chakra. (Khan, 1979b)] Stage of Citrinitas [third eye, crown chakra]*

Day 10 *Dream. "On waking it was like an inner torch shining gold light in my left eye."*

Day 12 *Rubedo stage
Dream. "I wake up suddenly in the night and a gold light is just hanging in the air."*

Dream Data Sheet 9.3: Extracts showing body symptoms related to chakras: S.F.

Day 3 *Indicated as entering the Loving self [solar plexus chakra].
"I slept well, no dreams remembered, experience a very strong heart beat, my body shakes a bit (I can't control this), some stomach ache. In the afternoon I felt the Kundalini energy strongly. I had to give into that and after that the shaking of the body stopped."*

Day 6 *Sacred self [throat chakra]
"I felt the ecstasy and splendour of this (practice). (It) needed a lot of work with much coughing and clearing of my throat until a clear, resonant sound came. I started to hear the sound of church bells quite loud. My body felt normal except for a headache at the back of my head."*

Day 7 *Pure self [third eye chakra]
"The sound in my ears shifted to a very high note, the church bells were still there, but quieter."*

Dream Data Sheet 9.3 continued

Day 8 Stage of Citrinitas (disintegration of self) [crown chakra, third eye chakra]
"After a long time I decided this wasn't going to get me anywhere and I was back in my chair (after seeing little black dots appearing all over in front of my eyes). I tried to rest, but just saw chaotic pictures of body parts and stone carvings, that were all mixed up."

"When doing silent zikr later I decided to follow the (inner) sound. I had a very high note in my ears above the church bells and wanted to try following this."

"I felt myself rising into the dome of a cathedral. It was filled with purple or pink light and little red dots floated all over the place ... Beings of light with wings appeared occasionally ... I thought a lot about Blake ... Again I saw an intense white light above my crown. I felt something shift in the bones of my head and then I found myself rising towards the light ..."

Then the light started to expand, filling my whole body and going beyond the body, until the body was expanded and dispersed into nowhere and everywhere." [third eye chakra]

Dream Data Sheet 9.4: Extract on bodily symptoms related to the chakras: P.W.(iii)

Stage of Rubedo

Day 26 *"Note. I feel heat and am sore on the right and left above the two cones on either side of head [crown chakra]. So I stopped zikr movements."*

P.W.(iii) Extract on body symptoms related to chakras leading to the level of Sacred self [throat chakra]

Day 20 *"Patterns of energy now more specific - as if circles of energy are rising up this body and then with a big shake of the head it goes out through the crown and is gone. Also like rays of energy, right and left around body then right and left testicles, then moves through the centre of the heart, then body shakes from throat to crown. Energy spinning very rapidly - then out."*

"p.m. Feels like energy starts building a body above me - even trying to get higher - sometimes it doesn't make it and falls back exhausted and after a while starts again."

"Evening - energy in testicles - legs - particularly knees, hands, palms, shoulders. Need to connect and balance left and right and testicles to eye to ears (behind and above). Becoming difficult to do practices as my head starts spinning after a short time. I let it spin."

Dreams are a bridge between this world and the world of pure spirit or non-dual awareness

The theme of dreams acting as a bridge between the physical world and the world of spirit is central to Sufism (Corbin, 1969). Whilst this is not explicit in the Tibetan Buddhist texts, dreams are definitely seen as an intermediary state or 'Bardo' between this world and the non-dualistic experience of clear light. Thirdly, as was shown in the analysis, the participants in this study, in particular S.F., S.L. and U., experienced the dream world as an intermediary realm or bridge between their initial waking consciousness at the outset of their process, and the transcendental realm, during the Citrinitas stage of their process. This idea is vital to the understanding of and insight into the role of dreams in the study of human transformation, i.e. that dreams are both a vehicle for the experience of transformation and vice versa, that they can be used as a means of monitoring the process of transformation. The key points that both Sufism and Tibetan Buddhism emphasise in their dreams theories in the spiritual journey from this world to the transcendental realm are outlined below.

The physical world

Both Tibetan Dream Yoga and Sufism regard dreams as a bridge between our dualistic consciousness in this world, and the non-dualistic consciousness of the state of unity consciousness.

In Tibetan Dream Yoga our attachment to the physical world is shown through 'ordinary dreams'. This is an example of dualistic thinking.

In the Sufi tradition 'false dreams' are prompted by human sensory urges, i.e. our instincts that draw us back into our physical natures.

The intermediate realms

In Tibetan Dream Yoga dreams of clarity show the presence of 'clear light' in our consciousness.

In the Sufi tradition dreams, once we overcome our sensory urges, show the presence of the Divine through our journey through the subtle levels of consciousness.

The transcendental realms of the Divine

In Tibetan Dream Yoga ‘clear light’ dreams are a sign of non-dual awareness.

In the Sufi tradition, true dreams are experiences of the Divine, and can only be experienced in a state of transcendental (non-dual) consciousness.

Both envisage three basic states of consciousness

In Sufism, dreams are an expression of the imaginal realm. Through dreams we access these levels of consciousness. Thus the imaginal world can be seen as one of three possible basic states of consciousness:

Material, imaginal and pure spirit.

This is comparable to the Buddhist notion of Gross mind, Subtle mind and Very Subtle mind which translate out as dualistic thinking, a mixture of dualistic and non-dualistic thinking, and non-dualistic thinking. Thus the two sets of similar ideas can be summarised below:

Sufi	Material	Imaginal	Spirit
Buddhist	Gross	Subtle	Very subtle

The similarity between the idea of ‘clear light’ dreams in Tibetan Buddhism and ‘true dreams’ in Sufism

There is also a similarity between the Buddhist idea (Wangyal, 1998) of clear light dreams, in which the subject, the experience of clear light, and the clear light dream are one, and the Sufi idea of Absolute Imagination (von Schlegell, 1997). In Tibetan Dream Yoga the subject retains the same lucid awareness of one-ness with the clear light from sleeping to waking. In the Sufi tradition, in the experience of Absolute

Imagination, the dream and dream experience remains when the sleeper awakens. The difference between the two is that Tibetan Buddhism eschews the need for the presence of form (Image) in the experience and requires there to be only clear light whereas in Sufism the Image, which is made of light, and is in fact a Divinely sent Vision which has no personal meaning or content, is accepted as part of this transcendental experience. Perhaps this difference between the two traditions can be understood when we remember the words that are used by each tradition to describe this dream phenomenon. In Tibetan Dream Yoga the words are “clear light dream” and in Sufism the words are “True dreams come from the Absolute Imagination”. Since imagination in Sufism is defined as the intermediary between the world of the Absolute and the physical world, then this type of imagination must include a form, an image, even if the image is a mixture of the personal (relating to the dreamer or the dreamer’s life) and the impersonal (the Holy Spirit taking on a visual form and appearing to the dreamer). This imagination is not to be confused with the Absoluteness of the Divine, which is beyond form and image. However, the Absolute Imagination, being an expression of the Absoluteness of the Divine, can reveal itself to the dreamer as a prophetic vision for example. Whilst this vision is revealed in a form, the latter can only be seen by the mystic when in a state of union with the Divine, i.e. a state of non-dual awareness. In the absence of a Divine vision, the mystic still remains in a state of illuminated consciousness (being conscious only of Divine Light), still at one with the Divine, but without an Image or a visual form. This last description coincides with that of the Tibetan Buddhist ‘clear light’. In Buddhism, the emphasis is simply on non-dual awareness in the clear light dream experience, which in fact is not a dream by western standards, but a state of illuminated consciousness.

The above comparison, out of which emerged several common concepts, show also that the results of the dream study provide some evidence for the applicability of the Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi concepts. These concepts not only form a traditional mystical basis for the understanding of the role of dreams in a psycho-spiritual transformation process, but they are also comparable to the model of transformation derived from the dream data in this study.

9.18 Triangulating the thematic analysis and the colour count analysis together with the Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi dream literature

The Sufi literature on dreams suggests a model that is comparable to the levels of self presented in the templates of the analysis. From the Instinctual self to the Sacred self there appears to be a reasonable degree of agreement between the themes listed in the templates of the self and the planes or levels of consciousness described by Ib'n Arabi. The only point of divergence is located in the level of the Pure self where the descriptions of Ib'n Arabi's sixth plane do not obviously correspond to the themes listed in the template of the Pure self. However, he does also describe the level as the 'sand dune divine outside the garden' (Harris, 1981). The idea of a sand dune suggests a pure, remote place where very little exists, like a desert. In this sense, it has something in common with the Pure self which is experienced as detached, remote, pure.

Secondly, Ib'n Arabi's model of the three realms, the material, imaginal and spirit, is observable in the retreat dreams and in the long term dream study of U. In these dreams the influence of the material world is clearly present in the stage of Nigredo, the Instinctual self. It is also present, but to a lesser degree, in the stage of Albedo, lessening in its influence from the Creative self to the Pure self. So far, this stage would be equivalent to Ib'n Arabi's imaginal realm. However, in the stage of Citrinitas, the material influence disappears altogether as the dreams and waking spiritual experiences can be seen as the spiritual realm in Ib'n Arabi's model. Rubedo then simply represents a return to the physical world, with the difference that spirit, soul (self) and matter are all united and influence each other. "*Spirit is being materialised, matter is being spiritualised.*" (Jung, 1983.)

Thirdly, Ib'n Arabi describes two kinds of imagination, imagination contiguous with the subject and object and imagination discontiguous with the subject (the mystical visions). The former is comparable to the dreams recorded in the Nigredo and Albedo stages where the dream stops when the dreamer wakes up, whereas the latter is comparable to the dream experiences where the dreamer wakes up but the dreams continue in the waking state as a vision. If it is to happen, it is most likely to occur in

the stage of Citrinitas. This was experienced on two distinct occasions by U. and once by S.F.

Finally, the Sufis, following Ib'n Arabi's two categories of imagination, divide dreams into two basic categories: Divinely-sent dreams, called 'true dreams', and false dreams which are prompted by human sensory urges. The human sensory urges can be seen in the Nigredo stage of the retreat dreams study most clearly, less so in the Albedo stage, but in Citrinitas they disappear or almost disappear. In Rubedo they return. Conversely, according to the results of the analysis, the influence of an autonomous 'inner guidance' or 'inner revelation' begins to become present in Albedo, and becomes predominant in Citrinitas. In the Albedo stage, imagination is influenced by a mixture of the dreamer's personal psychology and the influence of spirit, which acts as a kind of guidance, gradually balancing the psychic forces in the dreamer's psyche. In the Citrinitas stage there is the possibility of the retreatant experiencing Divinely-sent dreams or true dreams.

The Tibetan Buddhist dream literature suggests two important concepts. The first is the existence of the six realms of consciousness, with each realm coloured by a particular negative emotion, anger, greed, ignorance, jealousy, pride and pleasurable distraction. The six realms are related to the six chakras. The six emotions therefore represent distortions of the consciousness functioning in each chakra. For example, true anger results in a distortion of the energies of the base chakra, this in turn overwhelms the whole psyche and has a destructive effect. In comparing this idea to the results of the analysis, it can be seen that the Nigredo phase reveals these negative emotions whilst during the Albedo stage they lessen and begin to disappear.

The model of the three types of dream, ordinary dreams, dreams of clarity and clear light dreams, also finds its equivalent in the results of the analysis. Ordinary dreams, which contain the negative emotions pertaining to the six realms of consciousness, are comparable mainly to the dreams in Nigredo. In the Albedo stage, some of the inexperienced retreatants still showed the influence of this type in their dreams. However, most of the retreatants, including two exceptional beginners, S.F. and S.L., showed what the Tibetan Buddhist would call 'dreams of clarity' in the Albedo stage, in which an impersonal wisdom or inner guidance is present in the dream. In these

cases the levels of self were very clear in the dream texts. In the Citrinitas phase, some retreatants experienced dreams of clarity but one retreatant, S.F., and the long term dream study, U., had clear light experiences that were similar to the definition given in Tibetan Yoga clear light dreams (Wangyal, 1998).

To sum up, the Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist literature on dreams, whilst not actually providing a one to one correspondence with the model of the levels of self derived from the analysis, provides a reasonable degree of agreement with the results of this study. However, of the two bodies of literature, the results of this study agreed more closely with the Sufi model on the planes of consciousness. However, the Sufi model of the three realms and the Tibetan Buddhist model of the three types of dream correspond to the three possible states of mind in Buddhism (gross, subtle and very subtle). These models also explain the differences in the types of dreams experienced by the participants in this study, viz., the personal dreams correspond to the gross mind, the impersonal clear light dreams correspond to the very subtle mind and those 'in between', in the Albedo stage, correspond to the subtle mind. Thus a triangulation of the results of the analysis and its comparison with the Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist literature is evident.

9.19 Applicability of the Research

The use and objectivity of the colour/light/dark count in the analysis of retreat dream texts

The thematic analysis demonstrates the suitability of dreams as a monitor of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. However, even though the methods are clearly laid out to follow, it is a laborious research method and relies to a considerable degree on the experience and expertise of the researcher, as well as good insight into the retreat process and the levels of self (consciousness) being encountered. These are limiting factors when expecting others to undertake a similar type of research project.

However, the quantitative method used in this study, i.e. the colour count analysis, which agrees very closely with the thematic analysis for both the retreat dreams study and in the case of U., the long term off-retreat study, can be used as a simple,

objective means of analysing a set of dreams recorded during a psycho-spiritual transformation process to ascertain the phases of the retreat and the levels of self attained. It can also be used fairly successfully as a quick and objective means of 'measuring' and grading the comparable degree of success of transformation in a batch of several retreatants' dream texts. It relies on two principles, firstly that of the increasing presence of light as the psycho-spiritual transformation process progresses. Secondly, that the light will increase to a peak during the process and then decrease, indicating the gradual ending of the transformation.

However, this method does rely on the regular recording of dreams (and the timing) by the dreamer, as well as on the counting up, from the start of the process, of colour/light/dark in the texts by the researcher or the clinician as the dreams progress. If the dreamer starts to record their dreams in the midst of the transformation process, then this method cannot be used on its own, i.e. it must be combined with the use of the templates of the levels of self so that the stage and level of self in the process can first be established. Thereafter, the colour count analysis can be employed. In addition, as in the set of dreams that Jung presented, a colour count analysis cannot be undertaken if no timescale is recorded alongside the dreams. Secondly, this method relies on colour being counted from the dreams and not from waking images, as the latter are prone to the influence of conscious fantasies, which can distort the data gathered from spontaneous and uncontrolled appearance of colours in the dreams. Thirdly, this method relies on a first hand recording of the dream by the dreamer immediately upon waking up. Second-hand reporting tends to lose the impact of colour, light and dark and relies more on the remembered themes and events in the dream. The guidelines for interpreting the colour analysis are outlined below.

Interpreting the graphs of colour count vs. time

Five factors must be taken into account when interpreting the colour count graphs.

1. The total amount of light/colour/dark counted up over the period of the retreat is significant. The greater this count is for a given time period, the greater the transformation.

2. The analysis in Chapter 5 showed that when analysing a set of data that includes retreats of different length, the short retreats cannot be compared using the colour count ratios with intermediate or long retreats in the analysis. Similarly, intermediate retreats cannot be compared with short or long retreats.
3. If two or more retreats are undertaken by a retreatant then the pattern of the colour spectrum and how it might change is significant. For instance, the shifting of the graph peak to the right is an important indicator of steady progress from retreat to retreat, e.g. in looking at the retreats of P.W.(i) through to P.W.(vi), there is a change in the emphasis of the peaks. Graph 9, in the analysis (P.W.vi) shows the peak of the colour count in the Rubedo stage of the retreat. This has a higher colour count than in P.W.(i) Graph 7, where it lies in the level of the Creative self. It shows a gradual spiritual maturing within P.W. as the retreats have progressed along with an increased sensitivity to the inner light at a more subtle level of self. This shifting of the peak towards the Rubedo end of the retreat, when comparing a series of retreats undertaken by a retreatant is a pointer towards their maturing spiritually. It comes directly from the alchemical notion that the degree of transformation is indicated by the increasing presence of light in the process so that the experience can be grounded in the personality in the Rubedo stage, which after all is the fruit of the work.
4. A fourth factor, which was rarely present in the dream texts, is the appearance of colour combinations in the dream imagery. As discussed in Chapter 6, the analysis of U.'s dreams, it is significant when colours from opposite ends of the colour spectrum combine in the same image, as it indicates a psychic conjunction or integration of opposite forces within the psyche. This also follows from one of the principles of alchemy, that the resolution and integration of opposites within the psyche brings about a psycho-spiritual transformation.
5. A fifth point to consider is the number of levels of self accessed as well as the number of stages of the retreat process that are completed. In a series of

retreats, progress is indicated by accessing more levels of self and completing the four stages of the process.

6. To sum up, progress in the psycho-spiritual transformation process is indicated by:
 - a. the increasing presence of light/colour in the retreat, and the increase in the presence of light/colour over a succession of retreats.
 - b. the appearance of the graph peak near or in Rubedo or the shifting of the graph peak in successive retreats towards Rubedo.
 - c. the appearance of colour combinations in the dream texts and the number of levels of self that are accessed and the number of stages of the process that are completed.

Applicability of this research to the field of human transformation studies

The transformation model together with the use of dreams provides a more detailed understanding of transformation than was previously possible. The dreams have acted as an excellent medium for accurately monitoring such a process, by being able to indicate the stages of the process and by clearly showing the structure of the various levels of consciousness (or levels of self as defined by this study) that can be accessed during such a transformation. As was shown in the literature search of dream theories and in the section on competing perspectives, dreams (being a subjective experience) are in of themselves notoriously difficult to interpret, especially when presented in isolation. However, when a series of dreams is presented as part of a transformation process, interpretation becomes easier (Hamilton, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2004). As such, this study has contributed to a much greater understanding of the process by earmarking the stages of the process and the clusters of themes that depict each level of self that is experienced when undergoing a psycho-spiritual transformation. This makes the reading of the dreams considerably simpler as the interpreter can observe the presence of these themes and can recognise the order in which they appear (through the series of dreams). Nevertheless, as previously discussed, the ability to

recognise these themes in the metaphors through which the archetypes appear is not a task for someone who is inexperienced in reading dreams, or who has little knowledge of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. However, a more objective method, developed in this study, of using the simple technique of a colour-count analysis in the dreams, enables this problem to be largely overcome. This technique, together with a basic knowledge of the templates of the levels of self, allows the model to be easily used in such a process. In fact, the model and its use through the medium of dreams is generally applicable whether the subject is undergoing a transformation on or off retreat. The researcher can therefore extract the dream data from the client's dream journal and then use the templates of the levels of self to establish the unfolding sequence of themes associated with each level of self. Colour, light and dark can be counted up and plotted against time to give a visual picture of the process.

To sum up, this research is particularly useful to studies of the psycho-spiritual transformation process, in which a shift in consciousness is taking place. Of course, the transformation model developed in this study is best suited to a retreat setting. However, if a long term 'off-retreat' case study is undertaken, then it is possible that a 'shift' in consciousness will occur at some point in the process. Here, the results and discussion of U.'s case study can serve as a useful source of guidance. However, the results of more generalised long or short-term dream studies of people either on or off retreat are unlikely to conform to the patterns predicted by the transformation model if no transformation takes place.

Applicability of the research to the clinical setting

The transformation model together with the newly proposed dream theory has distinct possibilities for therapeutic use. It is particularly applicable to the clinical setting when a client reports undergoing a spiritual awakening process or a spiritual experience they cannot understand, and is seeking help. Thus the most important potentially therapeutic application of this transformational model is in the understanding of and in supporting/assisting someone who is experiencing a genuine psycho-spiritual awakening or as Grof calls it, a 'spiritual emergency'. Indeed, such experiences can occur apparently spontaneously or as a result of sudden shock, personal illness or through a near-death experience (Grof, 1989). Instead of

pathologising such experiences, as often happens in conventional psychiatric practice in the psychodynamic approaches to psychotherapy, the client can be helped to understand and appreciate the positive outcomes of this phenomenon.

For instance, in the clinical setting, the dreams experienced in the process not only show the psychological issues that the client is struggling with at each subtle level of self, but they also show the qualities that seek to come through each level of self. Further, they show the relative importance of these qualities in the client's process, i.e. the names given to each subtle level of self sums up the basic quality(ies) coming through the dreams into the client's personality.

Spiritual awakening, however, is not the only kind of crisis that this model is applicable to. As outlined in the newly proposed dream theory, there are several developmental leaps or transitions that clients may experience in their lives. Spiritual awakening or the exposure to transcendental consciousness is but one.

Thus, each person will experience the transformation process differently, depending on which qualities and level of self happens to be the most important for them to consciously incorporate, thereby facilitating their process. For some people, accessing the Creative self will turn out to be the crucial turning point in their transformation, for others it may be the Loving self, and so on. However, as the client transits these levels of self in their transformation process, one of these levels will be experienced by the client as being most significant. Such an experience points to and emphasises the need for that person to consciously work on incorporating the qualities coming through that particular level of self into their personality. This will help them to deal with the psychological issues that confront them (because of a lack of such qualities). Hence the potential application of this transformational map.

At the outset then, the clinician will need to first assess which developmental stage is being transited by the client. Thus whenever the clients present themselves in the midst of a crisis that involves a transformation of the sense of self, one of the archetypal levels of self will prove to be the most important level to incorporate in their process. One such developmental shift is the transition or shift in their consciousness from the pre-personal to the personal, i.e. from a fragmented or

undeveloped sense of self to a more solid, stable sense of self which can contain the instincts and safely express them. In the latter case, Nigredo will be the most important stage of the process as the Instinctual self becomes fully developed. In such a process the client will experience the primal archetypal forces through their instinctual nature. Typically this would require them to incorporate and contain their experiences of enormous rage and terror, insatiable sexual cravings or desires, intense isolation, the encounter with their sexuality and sexual identity, or the establishing of a stable mother/father figure. Once a solid sense of self has been attained that contains such instinctual forces, the process can then move on to completion. The Albedo and Citrinitas stages will not be conscious, but the Rubedo stage will involve this newly developed sense of self having to struggle to successfully re-enter the world.

If the client presents with a crisis involving the developmental shift or transition between the personal (mind-self) and the Centaur (body-mind or existential consciousness) or from the Centaur to transpersonal consciousness (the subtle or soul level of self) the process begins with a descent into Nigredo (Instinctual self) to re-experience the primal archetypal forces. However, Nigredo, in this process, is experienced more as a 'breaking down' of the grosser personal mind-self to 'breakthrough' to Albedo or the more subtle 'soul' sense of self, whereas in the transition from the pre-personal to the personal the need is to form a stable, non-fragmented sense of self. This transition from the personal to the transpersonal will involve the accessing of the archetypal subtle levels of self (between the Creative and the Pure self). One of these subtle levels of self will prove to be the crucial turning point in the process. It will involve the most time, energy and struggle of all the levels of self. At this point, the client may present a series of dreams revealing psychological or life issues that relate to a particular subtle sense of self. For example, dreams about opposite aspects being in conflict tend to indicate an unconscious tension between two attitudes or two parts within the personality of the dreamer. The research in this study has shown that this is the principal theme and issue of the level of the Wise self. Although the client in presenting the dreams may not be conscious of these inner psychic oppositions, the clinician in using the transformation model may be able to point out the link between the life issues they are experiencing and the conflict between the two opposites in the dreams. In resolving these oppositions, a new

synthesis and wisdom/understanding of themselves can then emerge in the client. These dreams will be part of a larger transformation process in the Albedo stage and so the clinician will know which level of self or stage is likely to follow on from the Wise self and appear in the client's dreams. In this way the client can be supported and helped to gain insight into the process of their psycho-spiritual transformation. Once this level is accessed, the process will move on to Rubedo and the stabilising and strengthening of a more transpersonal sense of self in the world (the Rubedo stage). However, in the transiting from the transpersonal to transcendental consciousness, the reverse of the first developmental stage (pre-personal to personal) occurs. Now the sense of self, which has become subtilised in Albedo, begins to break down in Citrinitas, as was evidenced in the case of S.F. and U. The archetypes are no longer experienced through personalised images, but more as presences, or as pure light, leading the subject to a non-dualistic stage of consciousness (no self). Once this has occurred, the turning point of the process has been reached, and the process then moves into Rubedo to incorporate a sense of self in the world that includes the awareness of all the levels of self, including the transcendental dimension, 'no self'. Jung refers to this latter as the experience of the 'Self'.

To sum up, the clinician, in making use of the newly proposed dream theory, may be able to identify the type of shift or developmental transition that is involved in the client's process, and in their familiarity with the templates of the levels of self, be able to track and assist the client in understanding which archetypal qualities need to be grounded in their personality. This approach acknowledges and helps the client to witness their struggle as a process. It contrasts with the current clinical tendency to reduce the client's process during such difficult developmental transitions by focusing more on their psychopathology or personal limitations.

Exploring the beneficial therapeutic nature of the sacred in clients' dreams

Recent dream research has begun to focus on the therapeutic nature of dreams, in particular the beneficial nature of a sacred experience in a dream. The sacred, in this context, refers to a spiritual expression of the Divine, a transcendental experience.

Phillips & Pargament (2002) began their research by looking at the relationship between stress and dreams, i.e. the relief of stress through dreaming.

“Dream theories have suggested dreams are an attempt at coping with life stressors.” (Phillips & Pargament, 2002, p.146).

This research led to the discovery of a link between stress relief and the experience of the sacred in people’s dreams. They defined sacred as follows:

“Religion and spirituality are used interchangeably and defined as a search for the sacred, the sacred referring to elements of the Divine or Transcendent.” (p.142).

Their paper explores the link between the experiences of the sacred in people’s dreams and the increasing sense of wholeness and wellness. The conclusion they arrive at is significant.

“Dreams that are perceived as sacred are tied to positive adjustment. Clinicians should be aware of these beneficial experiences, and be prepared to incorporate significant, memorable (sacred) dreams as potential aids to adjustment.” ... “Such dreams can elucidate a sense of spiritual connection.” (p.151)

Pargament (1997) has also described how the experience of the sacred in dreams leads to a relationship with a higher power in the dreamer. This can aid the coping process. Feeling a sense of connection and support from this ‘Divine’ can aid in dealing with stressful life events.

“In summary, clinicians can explore whether dreams are viewed as holy and sacred, or manifestations of God and what this means to the client. By exploring how the dream might be beneficial, new ways of viewing or acting towards a stressful life event might be elicited, that further adjustment to the event and growth.” (p.152)

In looking at the subtle levels of self and their templates it was evident that once the Creative self has been transited, the themes in the retreat dreams become increasingly 'sacred' right through to the Pure self in Albedo. This was experienced by the increasing presence of light in the dreams and the dreamer's corresponding experience of this light as being sacred. Secondly, the subtler levels of self led to an increasing sense of purity of self in the dreamer. This phenomenon progressed right through from Albedo to the stage of Citrinitas, transcendental consciousness. However, during this process, although this study did not question the participants as to the remembered effects of each subtle level, it was evident from the dreams and from the journal reports included, that there was, in every case, a progression in the dreams towards a more positive outcome by the end of the retreat.

Evidence of the sacred is to be found in examining the templates of the levels of self. The themes of the Instinctual self, which appear at the beginning of the retreat, are dark and shadowy. In the Creative self, they become 'lighter', more positive and optimistic. In the Loving self the themes become idealised and innocent. Whereas in the negative phase of the Wise self a much darker, more challenging shadow aspect in the psyche emerges, initially. However, as these deep tensions in the psyche become resolved, more balanced, wiser and more humane themes (and qualities) appear in the dream texts. This becomes the Wise self. In the Sacred self the themes centre around the 'God ideal', religious figures, religious sites and buildings. Whilst the appearance of such images in themselves does not signify the presence of the Divine, or the sacred or the transcendental, these images do indicate the capacity in the dreamer for an experience of the Divine, as was clearly evident in the cases of S.L., S.F. and U. This also became apparent in the succession of P.W.'s dreams where the subtler levels of self in P.W.(vi) are described in his journal as being of a sacred, spiritual nature. Examples of the sacred themes are found in appendix V for the level of the Sacred self in P.W.(vi), U., S.L. and S.F. The Pure self was not as prominent in the dream texts as the Sacred self but where it appeared clearly, S.L., S.F. and U., it revealed themes that are associated with purity, detachment, freedom and light. Many descriptions of the Divine include such qualities (Casto, 1996). However, it is in the stage of Citrinitas, that the presence of the transcendental and of the Divine, the sacred evidenced itself powerfully in some of the dream texts. Examples of the

presence of the sacred/Divine/transcendental in the Citrinitas stage are to be found as follows: Citrinitas: P.W.(i) p.1, P.W.(vi) p.3, S.L. p.10, S.F. p.11-16 (appendix V).

Thus it would seem that the increasing sense of spirituality or sacredness in the dreams shows through the themes in the templates as the subtle levels were being transited. This also correlated with the increasing sense of wholeness and well-being in the retreatant. To have included a study of this, comparing the retreatant's daily experience with their dreams, was not the purpose of this dream study. However, many journal entries showed a correspondence between the increasing spiritual sense in their dreams and their daily experiences within themselves (S.L., S.F., N.L.(i) & (ii), and P.W.(i) & (ii) and U. - the long-term case study). These journal entries also showed that the more the person experienced the sacred, light and the Divine in their dreams and in the retreat itself, the greater the transformation within themselves. Transformation in this study was deemed to be indicated by the amount of colour, dark and light appearing in their dreams. To sum up, there does seem to be a connection between the emergence of the spiritual archetypes in the dreams and the resulting disappearance of inner stress in the retreatants.

The increasing sense of sanctification in the retreat (or in a similar such transformation process) is not only beneficial to the dreamer, but it can lead to a powerful psycho-spiritual transformation within the dreamer's personality. The model of transformation put forward in Chapter 5 of this study can therefore, with the use of dreams, be used as a map for the clinician to follow during such a transformation in their clients. There are periods of increasing stress as the client approaches each level of self, but as they resolve the psychological issues at each level, the experience of sanctification in the dreams (and in the waking state) leads to a greater sense of wholeness and well-being.

9.20 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Research

Strengths

A very large body of data was collated for this study. Although the researcher's retreat dreams were not presented in the study (accounting for yet another large dream corpus) the former, having immersed himself in the subject for several years before the project began, was able to begin the study with a considerable depth of experience in guiding and following the dreams on retreat.

The data presented here has also been gathered at first-hand from the retreatants. It has not been solicited nor has any of the dream data been consciously considered by the retreatants prior to their retreats. Thus the dream texts have acted as a spontaneous set of data.

The solo retreat as described in the Research Design is a good, well-boundaried container for the study of transformation. It is also a relatively short, intense period involving, in part, the gathering of dreams, free of the everyday external influences. This contrasts with the psychotherapeutic dream studies of people who meet on a regular basis in a dream group, or of the studies of people who have remembered their dreams from the past, in the midst of getting along with their everyday lives. Such research studies unfortunately suffer from limitations such as difficulties in remembering dreams. This is partly due to the relatively stressful nature of everyday life compared to a retreat. The retreatants found it much easier to remember the dreams upon waking, i.e. there was a greater or more conscious awareness of their dream life than when off-retreat. The boundaries between the waking and dreaming life on retreat become much thinner than in everyday life. Secondly, much of the impression of everyday interactions, which are normally present in 'off-retreat' dreams, disappears within the first three to four days of retreat.

The variations in the use of retreat guides, retreat settings, cultural background, age, gender, degree of familiarity in the participants with the subject of retreat and of the esoteric aspects of Sufism, Buddhism and other such traditions, provided an opportunity to assess whether the process was dependent on external factors or on

exposure to spiritual teachings and to retreat, or not. As such, a greater weight is added to the validity of the research data.

The long-term 'off-retreat' case study of U., who recorded a profound series of transformation dreams in her third dream cycle, did interact with everyday life for a short period involving the first and part of her second dream cycle. However, for the most part of the recording of her dreams, she did not work and lived a quiet, more inward life at home. Much of the time she was alone with her husband being often away on business.

This naturalistic long-term dream study of U.'s was spread over two years, describing a profound psycho-spiritual transformation process. It is an unusual, almost unique record and yet it acts as a good complement to the intensive and relatively short nature of retreats. It also enables the researcher to discover the patterns in the process and to get to know the dreamer's use of imagery very well.

Similarly, by comparing the above with Jung's case study of a young man's dreams during a profound period of a psycho-spiritual transformation, in which the researcher did not participate, further validity is added to the research material.

Finally, by using the appropriate quantitative and qualitative research methods to cross-check the data, a clear picture of the process of transformation emerged. The comparison of this data with the traditional Sufi and Tibetan Buddhist texts on dreams enabled a triangulation of methods, further strengthening the conclusion that this study has arrived at.

Weaknesses

One weakness has been the absence of a control group, recording their dreams over a set period of time, whilst all the retreatants undertook their retreats. Such a control group would contain people who had some prior exposure to retreats and Sufism and some not. The participants undergoing retreat would have a similar group composition. This would have enabled a clearer and more interesting comparison to have been made between the dreams of people who do not have transformation

experiences versus those who do. It is always possible that some in the control group could by chance undergo such an experience even in the control group. However, this is likely to stand out clearly from the rest of the control group data and would provide further evidence of the differences between transformative and non-transformative dreams.

Secondly, although the results suggest the presence of an underlying psychic structure, of subtle levels of self, the entire research project relies on a set of dream data from one spiritual tradition, recorded in a subjective way, and analysed with a certain subjective input. To gain wider acceptance, it needs repeating by including a broader spectrum of traditions, at least the Buddhist, Yogic and the Eastern Christian Orthodox religions, who to this day still maintain a strong retreat tradition. This would have broadened and made the research programme considerably more interesting as well as lending greater credibility to the results. There is a need for further research studies to address this issue.

Thirdly, retreats were guided, reported and analysed in English only. A more comprehensive research programme would include the use of the native language of each culture for their retreat guiding, reporting and dream analysing. In addition, research samples of groups of retreatants, each from a different culture, would enable a more comprehensive analysis of the influence of the process through the different cultures to be undertaken. This factor, if taken into account, would allow for a richer cultural outlet for the dream study, and possibly reveal more information regarding the archetypal themes, and how they are experienced through each culture.

9.21 Summing up the Discussion

The research questions posed whether it was possible for dreams to be used as a means of monitoring a psycho-spiritual transformation throughout the process, if they could also reflect the subtle changes in consciousness that such a transformation might facilitate, and if these could be used as a tool for monitoring such a transformation 'off-retreat'. These questions have been answered unambiguously, and, together with the quantitative research methods developed for the analysis, have also led to the practical applicability of the colour count analysis in tracking a psycho-

spiritual transformation process. In using dreams to monitor human transformation experiences, a considerable amount of information concerning the process was revealed. Indeed, dreams have proven to be an excellent vehicle for such a study.

Most importantly, the results of the analysis of the retreat dreams, the long term off-retreat case study of U. and the case presented for analysis by Jung all reinforced the notion that the subject of this experience, during the process of a psycho-spiritual transformation, will have access to a number of subtle levels of self, according to their spiritual capacity and awareness. The process, which proceeds as a narrative, and which includes the experiencing of the levels of self, will go through four fundamental stages before completion. The templates of the levels of self together with the themes of spiritual retreat, form the basis of a psycho-spiritual transformation model.

Not everyone who experiences such a transformation will complete the process in the context of a short (6-15 days) or even intermediate retreat (10-30 days), and neither will they be guaranteed access to all the levels of self outlined in the analysis. However, what is clear is that the subject of transformation will move through at least the first two stages of transformation, confronting their instinctual nature and once they are relatively free of this, they begin to experience a more subtle level of self.

The degree of transformation is indicated by the increasing presence of light in the subject's dreams. The process, however, is determined to a large extent by the degree of readiness of the subject's psyche for such an experience, rather than their will or the length of the retreat, although these three factors do help to facilitate the process.

One unexpected but significant feature of this study has been the documenting of transcendental experiences and of the conscious experience of light in the dreams and upon waking from such dreams. This has, to the researcher's present knowledge, been the only dream study to have recorded such experiences. Such mystical experiences are discussed in the traditional Sufic and Tibetan Buddhist literature and have attracted the interest of contemporary transpersonal writers and researchers on the subject.

The Tibetan Buddhist and Sufi literature on the role of dreams in spiritual transformation compare well with the results of this study. Contemporary transpersonal views also lend strong support to the interpretation of the results and vice versa. As such this research makes a significant contribution to bridging the gulf between the traditional Eastern or spiritual views and the modern Western psychological views of the role of dreams during the process of human transformation. The result is that the latter is seen as both psychological and spiritual or psycho-spiritual. As such this thesis extends the pioneering work of Carl Jung by not only including spiritual experiences in the psychological process of individuation, but also revealing and describing the inherent subtle levels of consciousness (levels of self) that the subject encounters during such a process.

Lastly, the results of this study have expanded the role of dreams to be beyond the mirroring of personal problems and the daily interactions of people's lives. It opens up many possible clinical applications for a new theory of dreams based on the transformational model. This dream theory, along with the model of transformation, can apply to the different developmental shifts outlined in Wilber's spectrum of consciousness.

CHAPTER 10

Conclusions

10.1 The role of dreams in the study of human transformation

The research questions posed in this study sought to discover whether dreams could act as a monitor of the stages and the subtle changes in consciousness experienced during a psycho-spiritual transformation process on or 'off-retreat'. The data analysis presented in this study has demonstrated this point unequivocally.

10.2 The development of a new model of psycho-spiritual transformation

Jung (1968) discovered the link between the transformation process that his clients had experienced and the four stage model of transformation, described in the traditional Alchemical texts as Nigredo, Albedo, Citrinitas and Rubedo. With the exception of Ehlers (1993), a long-term case study, which confirmed the presence, in sequence, of the four colours associated with Nigredo (black), Albedo (white), Citrinitas (yellow) and Rubedo (red), the present research represents the first serious investigation using dreams into the process of human transformation. In proposing alchemy as a metaphorical model of psycho-spiritual transformation, Jung emphasised the four stages of the process, preferring to focus on the appearance of the archetypes during the process as contributing towards individuation, rather than seeing them as appearing in a transcending sequence - and resulting in a transformation of the subject's consciousness.

Instead, he suggested Albedo as being the stage when the subject would experience a transcending of the conscious state of the worldly self and, in the process, develop a clearer and deeper sense of their own being in relation to the greater Self. During this process, various archetypes would enter their consciousness by appearing in their dreams. Jung called this the process of individuation. The incorporation of these

archetypes resulted in the increasing awareness of the greater Self and this was indicated by the appearance at various points in the process or mandala-like symbols in the subject's dreams or in their conscious imagination.

However, this study develops a more detailed psycho-spiritual transformation model describing the four stages of transformation and the mandala symbols more comprehensively, and how they are experienced, in greater detail. It also describes the Albedo stage as an ascent through a succession of subtle levels of self. As the archetypes which appear in the subject's dreams are consciously assimilated in the psyche so the subject progresses through increasingly subtle levels of self. The details of each level have been listed in the templates of the levels of self. The latter extend and complement Jung's notion of the individuation of the Self, by breaking down the process in Albedo to a series of unfolding levels of consciousness, from the Creative self to the Pure self.

As such this study underpins and extends Jung's understanding of Albedo as the stage of the transcending self further. In fact, Albedo is the stage in which the archetypes Jung refers to are experienced as a series of increasingly subtle levels of consciousness or increasingly subtle levels of self, with each subtle level of self incorporating and yet transcending its predecessor, as suggested by Wilber's spectrum of consciousness (Wilber, 1977).

Furthermore, the more detailed transformational model of stages and levels of self, derived from the study of dreams on retreat, was confirmed when the latter's results were compared with the long-term case study of dreams recorded 'off-retreat' and with a long-term case study described by Jung. This model provides a fresh and more detailed insight into the orthogonal nature of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. That is to say that the spiritual or archetypal dimensions are represented in the model by a seemingly timeless inner structure of levels of consciousness expressing themselves through dreams. These levels are interwoven with the human psychological dimensions (physical, cognitive and emotional) of our lives, and with the stages or timing of the transformation process. As such, dreams seem to originate from the interaction between the worldly impressions of everyday life and the innate archetypal dimensions of consciousness that lie within the human psyche.

The model has been shown through the analysis of the retreats and the two long term case studies to be not only confined to the retreat context, during which it was shown to be relatively independent of the retreat guide, the location, gender, age (within certain upper and lower limits) and the culture of the retreatant, but it is also applicable when it comes to describing the transformation process as experienced outside the retreat setting.

10.3 The importance of light and colour in the transformation process

The results also emphasise the importance of light, colour and colour combinations in dreams when a psycho-spiritual transformation process is taking place. Whilst the role of metaphors in the dreams is crucial to understanding the individual's psychological issues and personality, the presence of colour and light in dreams is as important as the role of metaphors in understanding the transformation process. In fact, colour and light are as crucial to the reading and following of the psycho-spiritual transformation process as Jung's mandala symbols are to the process of individuation. They represent a more objective means of indicating and confirming transformation than the subjective means of interpreting the dream metaphors and symbols.

10.4 Experiences of clear light in dreams and upon waking

Some participants in this study had a profound experience of light in their dreams. A few had the experience of this light being carried over from the dream into the waking state. In the latter cases the participants had lucid dreams accompanied by the transcendental experience of 'no self'. These examples, which correspond to the description of 'clear light' in Tibetan Yoga of the Dream State texts, seemed to transcend our western notion of non-dualistic dreaming and the dream state, opening up the possibility of a fundamental state of clear consciousness that underpins all our conscious experiences. The work of Travis (1994) provides some evidence for this idea. This work confirms Travis's earlier research.

Psycho-spiritual transformation experiences cannot be induced

The dream texts showed that the transformation process exposes deep-seated inner tensions/conflicts within the human psyche, and if resolved, a relieving of stress and sense of well-being was experienced following the retreat.

Whilst altered states of consciousness can be induced (James, 1976; Grof, 1988), the psycho-spiritual transformation experience, as defined at the beginning of this study, cannot. All of the retreatants experienced some changes in themselves during their retreat, but only a few realised the criteria outlined for a psycho-spiritual transformation. The results showed that the latter examples had been, as it were, 'on the threshold' of such an experience and simply needed the time and space and a catalyst for it to unfold.

It seems, therefore, that the subject also needs to be 'ready' for such a transformation, as though the psyche, in beginning to experience an organic awakening process, is revealing its own 'time clock' that is independent of the outside material world. It is also conceivable that in some cases external circumstances 'coincide synchronistically' (Storr, 1983) with such an awakening process. Whether the awakening prompted the external circumstance or whether the reverse was true is open to question. It is more likely, as the model in the study suggests, that the inner and outer events do not act in a causal manner, i.e. one triggering off the other, but that they occur simultaneously. Such an idea suggests that there is a subtle relationship between this physical world and the inner world of the psyche, as is described by Ibn 'Arabi (Corbin, 1969). The recognition of the presence of the sacred in dreams is also an important factor in the resolving of traumas, inner conflicts and life's stressors.

10.5 Shifts in consciousness during the psycho-spiritual transformation process

The long-term case study of U. provided, via the dreams, clear evidence of a shift in her consciousness during her process. In fact, both long-term case studies showed the presence of cycles of dreams appearing in the transformation process. Whilst Jung's case study did not experience as dramatic a shift, there clearly was a shift between the two dream cycles presented. An explanation for these shifts was found in Sufic

literature, when the neophyte apparently experiences a change in their spiritual station (*maqgam*). Originally the literature search had revealed a misunderstanding of the term being used, when the levels of consciousness that the neophyte experiences and the maqqams were concerned. It was pointed out that these are two distinctly different phenomena. The levels referred to an inherent archetypal structure of consciousness, whereas the latter referred to leaps in consciousness, whereby the neophyte was able to suddenly experience these archetypal levels with greater clarity and subtlety. Each 'leap' enabled them to get closer to the essence of the archetypes.

10.6 Comparison of the results with the traditional literature on dreams

The model of transformation and results of the analysis show good agreement with the Sufic and Tibetan Buddhist texts which describe the process of spiritual development in terms of dreams. Once the terminology used by these texts had been 'decoded', the similarities between the dream texts and these spiritual traditions became evident. As a consequence, this research bridges the gulf between the traditional Eastern mystical views and the modern Western psychological views of the role of dreams during the process of psychological and spiritual transformation. The result is that the process is seen as neither purely psychological nor purely spiritual, it is both.

10.7 Application of the results to research and clinical settings

The transformational model can be used within the psychotherapeutic setting as a guide to helping clients through the psycho-spiritual transformation process and as a model for research into the phenomena of psychological and spiritual transformation.

The templates of the levels of self can therefore be used as a reference base for the identification of the subtle levels of self experienced during a psycho-spiritual transformation process. These subtle levels of self can also be identified more objectively through a colour and graph analysis of the dreams during such a process. This point became clear during the quantitative colour analysis which provided a means of assessing the transformation by the amount of light and colour present in the dreams. Through the graphic analysis, clear indications were given of the stages of the process as well as the degree of presence of each of the subtle levels of self. The

spiritual maturing of the subject could also be assessed by the shifting of the peaks in the colour count versus time graphs showing the history of successive retreats. In the long-term case 'off-retreat', the peaks in the colour count versus time graph shifted more and more towards Rubedo with each successive dream cycle as the transformation proceeded, albeit over a long period of time.

To sum up, this research is particularly useful to studies of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. As such, it contributes to a much greater understanding of the process by earmarking the stages (of the process) and the clusters of themes that depict each level of self that is experienced (during the process).

In addition, the research has two potential applications in the clinical setting. Firstly, it is applicable when dealing with clients who are experiencing a psycho-spiritual developmental 'shift' in their consciousness, as outlined by Wilber's spectrum of consciousness. In such cases, the client experiences both a disintegration of the old self and the emergence of a new more mature sense of self. Whilst this is occurring, the process may well see the appearance of some of the template themes in sequence, as listed in this study's analysis. That is, one or more subtle levels of self may be experienced during this 'shift' and the clinician may therefore, in recognising the sequence of emerging themes in the client's dreams, be more able to support and facilitate the transition. Secondly, a most important therapeutic application of this model is in the understanding and supporting of a client who is experiencing a genuine psycho-spiritual awakening/spiritual emergency. This may involve several 'shifts' in consciousness during such a process, with each cyclic 'shift' showing the themes of the subtle levels of self in the client's dreams. This can be a bewildering and profound process of change for the client, but with the support and understanding of a clinician, the transformation becomes far less traumatic and is more likely to proceed smoothly. For instance, the clinician may be more able to assist the client when the process is being blocked by a psychological issue, seeing it in the context of a larger and more important process. Often the psychological issue is focused on without the benefit of the larger picture, reducing the client's experience of change to a simple psychological problem.

10.8 A new theory of dreams

The analysis has demonstrated the role of dreams in the study of human transformation. It has also opened up questions about the limits of the existing dream theories in describing the process of a psycho-spiritual transformation process. Jung's dream theory, in drawing on alchemical symbolism to describe the stages of the transformation process, at least partially explains the experiences that the subject undergoes. However, this thesis extends Jung's ideas to incorporate the notion that the subtle levels of self that are encountered during the process are archetypal, and that these levels participate in the dreams of transformation, acting in part as a source of the dreams, as well as being contained within the psychological issues in the dream. This accounts for the typical psycho-spiritual themes that appear in the templates for each level of self.

The model of transformation presented in this study also describes the cyclic nature of the psycho-spiritual transformation process. This process results in a 'shift' in consciousness each time there is a leap in our human development. Thus, each 'shift' can be broken down into four basic stages in which several subtle levels of self can be encountered. Both long-term naturalistic studies revealed the presence of such shifts, albeit that these cases exemplified shifts on a transpersonal and transcendental level. Most of the retreats, being of a short duration, did not show a significant 'shift' in consciousness, although the retreatants did gain insights to deal with their psychological problems and experienced a change in their consciousness when encountering a more subtle sense of self. It seems therefore that this model may be able to explain in more detail the 'shift' phenomenon that takes place in Wilber's spectrum from the pre-personal to the personal and from the personal to the transpersonal. Hence a new development theory of dreams is proposed that incorporates all the existing dream theories into a spectrum of dream consciousness. By taking a spiritual perspective on the developing dream consciousness, i.e. one that incorporates the presence of the Divine in the dream experience, it becomes possible to observe the consciousness developing in the dreams through pre-personal to personal to the transpersonal stages. This idea drew on Wilber's model (Wilber, 1979b), which links psychotherapeutic theories in a continuous spectrum of consciousness.

Thus dreams can be interpreted using the appropriate dream theory to match their developmental stage or inner psychic condition, i.e. the dreams and the dreamer's inner psychic condition are seen in the broad context of the gradual evolution or awakening of their human consciousness, with each 'shift' in consciousness incorporating a more profound level of consciousness into their awareness. The transformational model described can be used only when 'shifts' in consciousness or 'developmental leaps' are taking place.

However, the levels of self should not be confused with the developmental nature of human consciousness, which is often the case in spiritual or religious texts. They instead represent an archetypal structure of levels of consciousness. Each time someone experiences a 'developmental shift/transition', e.g. pre-personal to personal or personal to transpersonal, the established 'self structure' or 'ego state' breaks down to reveal or give the person access to this inner structure of the levels of consciousness.

To sum up, this model can explain every 'shift' or developmental leap in consciousness that takes place in the human psyche via a series of dreams which act as a story of the dreamer's inner journey, ascending the heights of the self and descending to return and integrate the spiritual experiences in the stage of Rubedo. Thus the model together with its theory of dreams explains the source of dreams, why we dream and where dreams come from. Dreaming is not only a means of processing our worldly experiences, but dreaming acts as a bridge between our human sense of self in this world and our unknown sense of self in the mystical realms of spirit. It also suggests an explanation for why we forget our dreams, and why we lose the thread of consciousness between dreaming and waking.

In conclusion, this study has shown firstly that dreams are an appropriate vehicle for studying human transformation in terms of the stages and levels of self encountered in the process. Indeed, dreams seem to originate from the interaction between the worldly impressions of everyday life and the innate archetypal dimensions of consciousness that lie within the human psyche. As a result, dreams act as a background theatre stage in which dramatic changes in the consciousness of the

psyche take place. Finally, the pioneering work of Jung, which opened up psychology to the recognition of archetypes within the human psyche, is further developed to become a psychology of human consciousness, in which spiritual and psychological experience are re-united. This study shows the need for it to be incorporated into dream work, particularly so when a psycho-spiritual transformation process takes place.

To paraphrase Freud, the royal road to psycho-spiritual transformation is to be found in the careful analysis of dreams.

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